



# DOES PRAYER AVAIL ?



WILLIAM W. KINSLEY

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**IN PREPARATION**  
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The present volume, the second in the series of which **MAN'S TOMORROW** is the first, will soon be followed by a third in answer to the above question, all three closely conjoined in certain essential elements and in mode of treatment, and together constituting a discussion along new lines of a single unified, three-fold theme.

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# DOES PRAYER AVAIL?

BY  
WILLIAM W. KINSLEY

Author of "Man's Tomorrow," "Views on Vexed  
Questions," "Old Faiths and New Facts," etc.



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**DOES PRAYER AVAIL?**





## DOES PRAYER AVAIL?

### I

The Bible unmistakably teaches that God both can and does interfere in our behalf, that his interference often is a direct result of our asking, that all reasonable prayers offered in a right spirit are certain of favorable answer. The requests may be as varied as the healthful and intelligent longings of human hearts.

Some scientists smile at what they style the childish credulity of the Christian's creed. Our investigations, say they, have disclosed a universal reign of unchangeable law, not only in the production of material, but even of mental phenomena. We have found that within the walls of every particle of matter there is lodged a force; that these forces are of sixty-four or more different kinds, and their differences in nature and effect make all the differences in the substances about us; that they bear to each other certain unalterably fixed relations and exert over each other unalterably fixed influences. These relations we have been able by our experiments to reduce to mathematical formulæ. We have found that these forces never manifest themselves unless certain conditions are fulfilled, and that, when they are, the forces invariably appear and act always in precisely the same way. It is also claimed, that, as far back as we can peer into the past, this

same order has prevailed; that this rock-ribbed, wave-washed, verdure-clad, densely populated earth of ours has come up out of chaotic fire-mist by the operations of none other than these very forces which at the first were hidden within it; that the earth has developed from its unorganized primordial state into its present complexity with as regular gradations of growth as those through which the oak passes in pushing up from out the walls of the acorn its sinewy stem with outreaching boughs and waving pennons; that the earth itself is an organism as truly as the tree, has like complementary parts, has had a germinal beginning, has been, and still is, incarnating under pre-established laws of evolution, point by point, age after age, a certain set ideal under the guidance of a central germ-power, divinely commissioned it may be, but commissioned even as to the details of its finest microscopic work, untold millions of years ago.

How idle, then, it is, they claim, for weak, blind children of a day to presume to break in on this grand order of the universe! Go out into nature, they tell us, and you will find that not a single one of her laws is ever abrogated, that from their control not the least thing is for an instant released. Gravity holds in its grasp not only the ponderous suns with their whirling satellites, but every infinitesimal mote that floats in the air. The force shut up within the walls of an atom of carbon is never dislodged, and never loses a single

characteristic. Manacle it with fetters of frost, immerse it in the white heat of a furnace, smite it with a trip-hammer on the face of an anvil, hurl it into the chemical embrace of an affinitive element, do what you will with it, it will reappear identically the same atom informed by precisely the same mysterious force. This speck of matter defies all powers of earth or sky to batter in its walls and drive out its occupant. (Every force, the world over, says that only those who find its secret and meet the conditions can command its services. Do you want bread? Here are the seed, the soil, the air, the shower, and the sun-beam. Matter and force are at your bidding, but their laws are inexorable. Rays of light will travel ninety-five millions of miles to serve you; the atmosphere will gather its clouds from the ocean and float them across a continent to pour their treasures at your feet; the mountains will furnish you millstones, and the running brooks will turn them. The forests that grew a hundred thousand years ago you may find packed away in beds of anthracite, waiting to heat your ovens so soon as your dough is ready for the baking. Not a force in nature but will serve the veriest outcast if he will comply with the conditions; not one, even the humblest, will condescend to move so much as a hair's-breadth even for the Czar of all the Russias, unless he does. The prayerless sinner and the praying saint meet here on a common level.) It is thoroughly unscientific and ab-

surd to claim that the all-wise Creator has been or can be induced to change his plans by the importunate pleadings of a little creature to whom he has given a brief existence on one of the obscure satellites of one of the million suns that make up one of the nebulous clusters with which the heavens are swarming. What greater presumption can be imagined? Has the Almighty so sadly blundered in his plans that this little creature can discover to him their defects, and induce him to change at this late day, when everything is so intimately interlinked and interdependent that an interference in one part may demand a reconstruction throughout the whole in order to avoid widespread confusion and ruin? Can God spare any special thought now for such infinitesimal interests so long as the concerns of this vast swinging universe are upon him? He has laid down broad general plans. We cannot reasonably expect him to listen to our baby prattle about the petty details of our vanishing lives. If we thrust our hands into the fire, live in a malarious district, are capsized in mid-ocean, we must suffer the natural consequences, and look about us, as best we can, for a more congenial environment.

Such, in brief, is the attitude assumed at the present day by a majority of scientists on this, one of the most vital and perplexing of questions. This their creed is, as I think can be clearly shown, a most mischievous mixture of truth and error. The spirit of cold speculative scepticism

pervading it is making rapid inroads upon all classes in society. How many even of those who have been gathered into the fold of the church have fallen under the blighting spell of this genius of modern materialistic thought! How many prayers are simply the outbreathings of a reverential fear, or are a mere dead formalism, or the results of sheer habit! How many are little else than agonized longings accompanied with no joyous expectation! How few, very few, are offered with the same confident assurance of results as inspires the farmer when he sows his fields, or the telegraphic operator when with his key he closes the electric circuit and sends his messages over the long leagues of ocean cable!

My purpose at present is to show:—

1st. That phenomena and the producing forces with their laws or modes of working, brought to light by scientific investigations in the fields of physics and of metaphysics, harmonize perfectly with the Scripture view of prayer, and abound in suggestions of how God can interfere in nature without destroying any force or abrogating a single law.

2nd. That, as a fact, he has thus actually interfered again and again.

3rd. That it is not only not presumptuous, but most natural and reasonable, for us to expect that he will interfere for *us*, insignificant though we may seem to be.

4th. That he will interfere because we ask him,

doing for us what otherwise he would not have done.

5th. And lastly, that he will not in a single instance withhold any real blessing which is asked for in the right spirit, and the bestowal of which lies within the compass of his power.

1st. *How* can God answer prayer without destroying any force or abrogating any law? In my own experience, real light on this point first came from the perusal of Dr. Bushnell's "Nature and the Supernatural." His mode of treatment has long since passed out of memory, but a thought-germ was lodged in my mind which has since grown into a deep-rooted conviction. As, however, I have followed out these lines of thought, it has been a constant source of surprise that so many of the scientists, while they have with tireless patience and keenest insight unraveled much of the infinite intricacy that attends the interplay of nature's forces, unearthing so many secrets and becoming masters in so many fields of inquiry, have seemingly lost sight of that most interesting and important of all facts, that everywhere ample provision has been made for the efficient interference of direct will power. One would think that they could not have failed to discover it, for there is hardly a waking moment in the lives of any of us when we are not conscious that we actually exercise volitions, and that these volitions effect changes, and sometimes most important ones, in the world about us. How our

wills are thus linked with matter, it would probably puzzle the wisest to explain; but that they actually are, is a fact all must admit. And so I surmise it is not the fact, but the deep significance of the fact, that has so strangely escaped the notice of so many of our savants of science.

Sir Oliver Lodge, F. R. S., strangely stands almost alone among eminent scientists in open recognition and advocacy of this directive power of the will over the forces of nature. In his work on "Science and Immortality" he expresses the utmost astonishment that Professor Tyndall should have overlooked or ignored this when he wrote in his "Fragments of Science" that "the principle of the conservation of energy teaches us that the Italian wind gliding over the crest of the Matterhorn is as firmly ruled as the earth in its orbital revolution around the sun, and that the fall of its vapor into clouds is exactly as much a matter of necessity as the return of the seasons. The dispersion, therefore, of the slightest mist by the special volition of the Eternal would be as much a miracle as the rolling of the Rhone over the Grimsel precipices, and science asserts that without the disturbance of a natural law quite as serious as the stoppage of an eclipse, or the rolling of the St. Lawrence up the Falls of Niagara, no act of humiliation, individual or national, could call one shower from heaven or deflect toward us a single beam of the sun." In this same paper, in the same connection, Professor Tyndall affirms,



“we have ceased to propitiate the powers of nature, as, in Protestant Countries, at least, it is conceded that the age of miracles is past.” “The idea of direct personal volition mixing itself in the economy of nature is retreating more and more.”

Over my body, in many particulars, my will exercises direct control. I, for instance, order my hand lifted. The mandate instantly flashes from the brain down the motor nerves to the very muscles in waiting, and their fibers at once begin to shorten. I exercise this directive will power against the force of gravity, temporarily overpowering but not destroying it, for it still continues to pull the hand down with the same might as before. This overbalancing of one force by another is taking place everywhere throughout nature. For illustration, take a tumbler of water. If it were not for the cohesive attraction between the particles of glass being stronger than the gravity, the sides would crumble into dust, and sink with the water to the lowest attainable level. Gravity has not been destroyed, but simply mastered by a stronger antagonist. Remove a part of the heat from the water, and it will become a crystallized solid, showing that until now the heat force has been holding the crystalline in check. Lower still further the temperature, and the sides of the tumbler will burst in pieces, the crystalline force overcoming the cohesive. Raise the temperature, and the water will change to steam, and

a repulsion between the particles will appear, the heat driving them asunder, despite all that cohesion and gravitation can do.

Over the world outside the body, the control of our wills, though mostly indirect, is equally potent, and yet nature is not thrown into confusion, not a single force destroyed, not a law abrogated. Our volitions are simply supernatural, not contranatural. Our wills act indirectly by complying with the conditions that unfetter nature's forces. The scientists have established beyond question the fact that there is not a single one of these forces that is not wholly inoperative unless certain conditions are fulfilled, and just as soon as they are, the force begins to work its wonders. Scientists have even gone further, discovering in very many instances precisely what those conditions are, and thus placed it within our reach to utilize those forces in the arts of life.

Back of our will power, acting as its guide, there now exists, thanks to these explorers, a well-informed intelligence, and we have become masters of nature by simply understanding and complying with her laws. For instance, we want homes for ourselves and our little ones, and so we cast about and find abundance of crude material,—sand and clay, metal and slate, rock and standing trees and running water. Our wills decree that these shall be transformed into cemented walls of brick and stone, framed timbers, tessellated floors, frescoed ceilings, plate-glass windows,

roofs and mantels, furnaces and swinging doors, and step by step, under the directive power of the mind, the wondrous change is wrought. We even make our wills felt in the domains of vegetable and animal life, improving old varieties and developing new ones among fruits and flowers and domesticated animals, enriching and seeding our soils, and multiplying our flocks and herds to meet our ever-growing wants.

The processes by which our wills enforce their decrees may be a little tedious, but the ends are reached, the course of nature is seriously broken in upon, results attained which otherwise nature never would have attempted, yet no disorder has anywhere ensued. What marvelous effects have been produced by this intelligent will power of man, cunningly directing to its own uses the ever-waiting elemental and vital forces! How many rivers have been bridged, beds of rivers shifted or tunneled, mountains discrowned or their rocky centers pierced to open highways for the world's commerce! The very lightnings have been tamed into flying Mercurys to carry the thought-messages of this busy-brained master, the oceans whitened with his sail, the continents covered with his networks of railways and canals, barren wastes changed into vineyards and palm-groves and orange-orchards, the unshapely quarries of granite and of marble transformed into palaces and statue-crowned temples to body forth his ripest culture and most holy thought.

The influence of the human will has had even a wider circuit assigned it. Many of us have known instances of weak wills being overawed by stronger ones, and the domination being so absolute as for the time being to actually blot out every distinctive trace of personality and suspend individual responsibility. Not one of us but has felt, time and again, the indirect power of another's will reaching us through channels of argument, persuasive kindling of the fancy, eloquent appeal, shrewd suggestion, or show of appreciative sympathy. There are a thousand avenues to the heart, a thousand ways to arouse the conscience, inflame passion, fill the chambers of the soul with dread alarms, and these are discovered and utilized by positive and aggressive souls athirst for wealth, power, or prestige. Society has its born leaders. Individuality and responsible free choice are with the vast majority still retained, but it is through these multiform influences of personal character that the life of the world's subtile social organism is, under pre-established spiritual laws, regulated and maintained.

Until recent years this was the utmost limit of conception entertained by the most advanced investigators, of the outreaching of our spiritual powers,—that of a direct control over the muscular tissues of the body and of an indirect over the physical forces in the world outside. But new light has come. It has been discovered that the will can make its direct mandates felt even beyond

the boundaries of the body and to a most astonishing extent. How this is done is still as profound a mystery as how at the first it causes the muscles to contract, but the fact has, by painstaking care on the part of the Society for Psychical Research, in guarding against deception or mistake, been placed at last beyond all controversy. Ponderous bodies have repeatedly been lifted and moved about by it and wonderful feats of skill performed without any discoverable physical contact, purely through some occult psychic force. Scientists at the first stoutly discredited the alleged phenomena, being so wholly out of the ordinary and the probable, and so often mixed with fraud, but being persistently repeated under the strictest safeguards they have now quite generally pronounced them genuine, though yet widely differing in their interpretations. Flammarion, the celebrated French astronomer, unhesitatingly asserts that the phenomenon of levitation has been absolutely proved, though he cannot explain it. Careful experiments in his own house, under his own eye, under his own prescribed conditions, have proved it. More astounding still, it has been equally well established that strong personal magnetic currents flow out from us, frequently over wide spaces, impressing, telepathically, the subtle power of our presence on each other beyond the ken and without the aid of any of our bodily senses,—soul seemingly touching soul even when continents intervene. Sir Oliver Lodge, Camille

Flammarion, F. W. H. Myers and many others of international fame among scientists have, without reservation, declared this to have been definitely established. Gifts, both of them, certainly ours, and of priceless value, though placed, as yet, tantalizingly just beyond our reach to utilize here and now, gifts held in reserve seemingly as a promise and a prophecy of some freer, larger life beyond.

Thus we see that to the touch of the human will all nature is plastic, that every facility has seemingly been provided for its efficient interference. Think you that, in a world where so many doors have been so invitingly left open for the will of the creature to enter and occupy, the will of the Creator has been studiously excluded? Can science, which has so conclusively proved the one, consistently deny the other? Is it not rather forced to assert that, so far as God's will has greater innate power and is guided by a profounder knowledge, it has proportionately greater facilities for effecting its purposes and, at the same time, leaving every force and law, both in the material and mental kingdoms, equally undisturbed?

Before the birth of science a radical misconception of the true nature of miracles was entertained, and seems still very generally to prevail, and has largely provoked the attacks made on the Bible record. There is little doubt that scattered through the Bible there is much of allegory and

legend, of tribal tradition, myth and folk-lore, of apologue, parable and Oriental poetic extravaganza, and yet while it is not my present purpose to sift out the wild growths of the imagination from the plain, sober facts of history, or to stand sponsor for all, or any, of the instances of miracle-working recorded in its pages, it is my purpose to show how it was possible for God, if he so chose for reasons which seemed good to him, to directly and effectively interfere in many such like ways as those narrated, in behalf of his helpless and suffering children, without destroying any force, setting aside any law, or disturbing in any way the predetermined plan of his creation. The question of the nature and degree of the inspiration of the Scriptures, and of the extent of their inerrancy, is wholly beside the present discussion. Its settlement is not essential to it, and need not now be considered.

Precisely how God's will sets free, or holds in check, nature's forces is no more of a mystery than how our own wills come into touch with, and dominate over them. There is no more of a deviation from nature's laws in the one case than in the other. Both volitions are, as far as we can discover, essentially the same. If the scientist can by his own will put out his hand and stop the spinning of a top, what reason has he for thinking that God's will cannot check the whirling of a world. Has he any evidence that his will is more closely linked with matter than God's? With our

yet extremely meagre knowledge of nature's laws and forces we have very inadequate means of determining precisely what is beyond the ready reach of a will so masterful and so wise as we are warranted in believing God's to be.

The turning of water to wine and the feeding of five thousand with the five loaves and few fishes, though they involve something more than simply the overmastering of one force by another, and are at first more difficult of apprehension and belief, and lie more exposed to the adverse criticism of scientists, yet, after a careful scrutiny, will be found, after all, remarkably analogous in many respects to achievements of the human will, and no more contranatural, or improbable, or wrapped in a profounder mystery. There is no necessity for thinking that in these or kindred acts any new matter or force was brought into existence. The wine and the miraculously provided cakes and fishes differed in no respect in their elemental atoms, or in the combinations of these atoms, from products which nature, assisted and guided by man, had for centuries before been manufacturing. There was no call for any new matter, as it was already at hand in vast abundance. Christians need not claim this. Indeed, neither need they claim that, when, as it is recorded, in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, he brought forth something out of nothing, as too many unthinkingly believe. Scientists may well pronounce such a notion absurd. An



achievement like that would transcend even divine power, for it involves a contradiction, an impossibility. Something cannot come out of nothing. It is nowhere revealed that there ever was a time when matter did not exist. The beginning spoken of in Genesis need have reference only to the present order of things, the present processes of evolution through which the burning and non-burning balls of matter have been made to people space. Although this history may reach back over what to us are inconceivable periods, yet there unquestionably was a time when not a single sun or satellite anywhere existed, when matter must have been in some other radically different form. Further than this we need not go. If it was not originally a part of God, and is not now to be considered as an *emanation* from him, it must in our thought take rank as an equally self-existent and eternal entity. The fact is, the more prolonged and profound our study into its nature, the more impenetrable appears the mystery that shrouds it, for at first we can little realize that the substance we see and taste and handle is revealed to us simply by the effect produced upon our sense-nerves by forces that lie hidden behind it, so that we, when further advanced in our reflections, are led to query whether, after all, it is not the presence of *force* that is revealed to our consciousness rather than that of *matter* as the medium of force, and whether it is not of the existence simply of *force* that we have any certain knowledge.

As I have said, we need not infer that in these miracle-workings any new substance was brought into being, but only new methods adopted, or hitherto unused forces liberated, or greater direct power employed by a sovereign will in carrying out its decrees. The human will had before this accomplishment the same ends in other ways, for how else can we explain the presence of the wine already drunk at the wedding feast, or the bread and fish in the baskets of Christ's disciples before he miraculously multiplied them? But the human will had been compelled to resort to tedious and, for the most part, indirect methods to accomplish what the Divine will wrought without delay, and apparently by direct impressment. I say "apparently," for it is quite possible that the methods employed were still indirect, though not accompanied with any noticeable delay. We ourselves are continually shortening the processes we employ in carrying out our purposes. By a more perfect knowledge of nature's laws we become more complete masters of her forces. What giant strides have we already made in this direction, especially during the nineteenth century! It is difficult for us to realize the nature and extent of our recent victories over matter. With what blank amazement would Washington and his companions be filled were they now, without knowing what had taken place, to return to the country they fought to save! For since Washington closed his eyes to earth, there have come the

steamship, the locomotive, the wire strung and the wireless telegraph, the telephone, the phonograph, the flying machine and thousands of shortening processes. In his day, yes, and forty years later, to cross the American continent was a task of many weary months. Now we make the trip in less than a week. The news of Waterloo was three days reaching England, but the tidings of the last bombardment of Alexandria, though half-way round the globe, took only as many minutes. The thunder of the first gun had hardly died away along the banks of the Nile before the air was throbbing with its echo on the banks of the Thames. We have also of late, through our telephones, succeeded in holding easy converse with each other, though separated by leagues of distance, even in actually distinguishing the peculiar intonations of each other's voices. At what time these discoveries of new forces and how to unfetter them shall reach their limit, who would be bold enough to predict? and yet not until science has won its final triumph over nature should devotees of science be unwilling to concede that it is clearly possible that Bible miracles were the work of Nature's forces simply guided by a will thoroughly conversant with Nature's laws, which were within the reach of the directive power of the will of a man if illumined by the insight of a God. But even if these miracles were performed by direct will-power, still we can point to constantly recurring instances in which pre-

cisely analogous effects are produced both in the vegetable and animal kingdoms, as well as in the higher realm of the human will. Scientific treatises call our attention not only to an inorganic, but also to an organic, chemistry, and assure us that the vital forces, working through complex animal and vegetable organisms, effect combinations of elements which outside of their laboratories or the laboratories of man are never produced, and are marked by extreme instability, readily decomposing under the influence of heat or fermentation, so soon as their influence is withdrawn. Those mysterious forces lodged inside the walls of seeds prove themselves the masters of other forces equally mysterious lodged inside the walls of atoms. Carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen never would have congregated into such chemical groups, or arranged themselves along such lines of symmetry, or climbed to such dizzy heights, directly against the steady pull of gravity, were they not working under compulsion; and so soon as they escape from the thrall of their taskmasters, their old individuality comes back to them, their old modes of combining, their old circles of association return, and the unstable organic compounds are torn down into the more stable, original, inorganic ones. Here we witness one great class of Nature's forces—the atomic—lorded over for a time by another and superior class. As we are daily witnesses of these facts, we never think of questioning them.

Further than that, we see the products of vegetative-vital forces taken possession of by animal-vital, and grouped into still more strange and higher compounds, and the chemic compelled to play a part still more foreign to their first estate. We know that this, too, is a case of compulsion, for the very moment vitality ceases, disintegration begins. These nitrogenous combinations are the very embodiment of instability.

We are daily witnesses of more startling wonders still. They form part of our personal experiences. We find that we can by sheer will-power compel even these higher forces of animal vitality, and through them the lower, to do our bidding. The late Dr. Carpenter, the foremost physiologist of his day, called especial attention to this fact, asserting that thus we can greatly add to the acuteness of any of our bodily senses, can actually compel the nourishing blood to flow to any part of the system and infuse new vigor. The experiences of artisans and artists, astronomers and microscopists, experts and specialists in every class of work, deaf-mutes and the blind, abundantly confirm this. There are few of us who have not found by actual experience that by calling up certain thoughts we can turn the cheek pale or crimson it with blushes, flood the eyes with tears or make them merrily twinkle or flash with angry fire, cause the heart to violently throb or intermit its beats, throw the blood to the brain, make the knees quake, the skin perspire, the whole

body tremble with intensity of emotion. The control which persons of cultivated histrionic powers have over the body to make it the vehicle of thought can be appreciated only by those who have witnessed the masters as they have entranced their audiences, and who have themselves been thrilled and spirit-bound under the spell of their enchantments.

If the vegetative forces can thus dominate over the atomic, the animal over the vegetative, and the will of man over all, what valid objection can science urge to the Christian's creed that God's will can by direct impressment effect combinations in the elements which Nature's forces indirectly and uncompelled bring about by slower processes according to the terms of their divine commission? Why may not God's will have as immediate and complete a sovereignty over the earth or the universe, as we over these complicate bodies of ours, which our spirits permeate through and through by their informing presence? And why may not his sovereignty be inconceivably more immediate and complete, and still retain in its relationship its marked analogy to the characteristics of force which science has herself recorded? Why may not the Divine will not only make bread, wine, and fish directly out of the surrounding elements, but heal lepers, restore the blind, or even raise the dead, and still do no more violence to Nature's systems of law than the human will is doing every day? There are multi-

tudes of well-authenticated instances in which persons have by simple determination checked for considerable periods the inroads of disease and even permanently broken its power. So startling have been the effects of the will and of the imagination over these susceptible bodily organisms various cults have come to the front of late and gained great prominence numbering their adherents by the thousands who, afflicted with certain functional nervous disorders, have without the use of drugs genuinely and permanently regained their lost health.

Though they are widely apart in many of their tenets, one embracing negations which impress every one outside their circle as the very height of absurdity, denying alike the existence of matter, pain, disease and death, all agree in the curative force of faith, and all gain access through the selfsame charm of mental suggestion to that most marvelously gifted, most mysteriously submerged part of the soul, the subconscious self, to the nature and therapeutic, creative and conceptive powers of which I will hereafter call special attention.

It was the aid of this very same sub-conscious self Christ is supposed to have invoked in performing many of his acts of healing, the exercise of faith being strictly enjoined, while in many he undoubtedly transcended human achievement, though in no single instance are we necessitated to believe that he violated any law, destroyed any

force, or in the least infringed upon the universal order.

Psychic cures, under varying forms and names can be traced back to the very dawn of history. Five hundred years before Christ at the ancient Greek Shrine at Epidaurus, multitudes of sick were restored without medical assistance through what was claimed to be the miracle-working of the demigod *Æsculapius*. The temple-sleep enjoined closely resembled the hypnotic trance of to-day, and the same mental suggestion was drafted into service. Priests in the early time claimed the sole prerogative of healing and a kindled faith was their prime curative agency. Only during the last three or four centuries have the study of anatomy, the careful diagnosis of disease and medical treatment been in vogue.

The Puritans rightly claimed that solely by the King's touch, though they could not explain how, cures were wrought in cases of scrofula. Through the middle ages and down even to our own time in Catholic countries, the common people, being possessed of a seemingly inexhaustible superstition and credulity, have revered without reserve relics however absurd and spurious, if vouched for and blessed by the priests, and by the exercise of this unwavering faith have actually been cured of many of their diseases.

Pilgrimages to cathedrals and holy shrines have not been without avail. The famous shrines of the Virgin at Lourdes in France and of Saint



Anne de Beaupre at Quebec, and the cathedral of Saint Paul and Saint Helen at Treves in Prussia, where is still exhibited what is claimed to be the seamless coat of Christ, and many other consecrated places in different countries, are thronged with eagerly expectant and rejoicing multitudes even now, on whom the miracle of healing either is about to be, or has already been, marvelously wrought.

Over three hundred thousand still visit Lourdes every year. These cases of cure are attested by the highest medical authorities, showing that faith even though ignorantly based on lies and absurdities, does wondrously modify the vital functions of these nerve-thrilled bodies of ours.

Liberal, progressive members of the medical profession are at last questioning whether drugs and other external agencies do much more in many cases than remove the obstructions that clog the free play of the vital forces within, and in their treatment of functional diseases of obscure nervous origin, the fruit, many if not most of them of disorganizing thoughts that have been suffered to find lodgment, they are wisely making overtures to modern psychotherapy as a helpful ally.

Some writers and thinkers have doubtless over-rated the curative energy of this subconscious self, but they certainly have made no mistake, except in the extent to which such cures can be carried. Sudden fright, worriment in financial

difficulties, brooding over loss of friends, anger, jealousy, remorse, chagrin, discouragement, alienation, loneliness and longing,—all have their depressing effect on the body, closing up the channels, causing accumulation of bile in the blood, hindering the normal workings of the liver, and obstructing in various ways the free flow of the life forces, and if not checked in time will lead to serious illness, if not to positive brain-lesion. Anger in a mother has been known to poison a nursing child, violent paroxysms of rage or fright to cause jaundice and apoplexy. The experience of Stanley, during his search for Livingston through the Dark Continent is familiar to all, how during the hours of a single night agonizing thoughts turned his hair as white as snow.

A noted American writer and medical graduate says, "Every thought tends to reproduce itself, and ghastly mental pictures of disease, sensuality and vice of all sorts, produce scrofula and leprosy in the soul which reproduces them in the body. Anger changes the chemical properties of the saliva to a poison dangerous to life. It is well known that sudden and violent emotions have not only weakened the heart in a few hours but have caused death and insanity. It has been discovered by scientists that there is a chemical difference between that sudden, cold exudation of a person under a deep sense of guilt and the ordinary perspiration; and the state of the mind can some-

times be determined by chemical analysis of the perspiration of a criminal which, when brought into contact with selenic acid produces a distinctive pink color."

/ Stigmatization, that strange experience whose recurrence during several of the past centuries is a matter of record, at first thought to be miraculous as a special mark of Divine favor for exceptional saintliness, but now diagnosed by cold medical science as a neurotic phenomenon of hysteria, most strikingly illustrates the power of thought on the human body. There have been two noted cases of it in recent years. One, the case of Louise Lateau of Belgium who died 1883. On a Friday following recovery from a severe illness this woman discovered blood flowing from her side; on the next Friday, from her feet; on the next from her back and palms of her hands; in four weeks, marks of thorns on her forehead moist with blood. She had fits of ecstasy and during vision enacted the events of the Passion, extending her limbs in the form of a Cross.

Another similar case occurred in America in 1891, that of a Mrs. Stuckenberg. Besides the above phenomena, a Cross appeared in her forehead, also on her chest, and the outlines of a heart and the letters I. H. S. on her right shoulder.

These cases were thoroughly investigated by professional and scientific men and pronounced to be undeniably genuine. Hawthorne made telling

use of this class of phenomena when he wrote his "Scarlet Letter."

Glad surprise, large and unlooked-for success, the return of long absent loved ones, their rescue from danger or illness, appreciative sympathetic recognition of merit, fruition of long-deferred hopes, the stir of patriotic or religious fervor, — all have their medicinal influence, their exhilarating, uplifting power. Thoughts sudden and startling have often brought sickness or banished it, brought death even in the midst of healthful life, or lengthened life's lease for those apparently passing within the shadow. If impalpable thought is clothed with such recuperative and destructive power, and if between the Creator and his creatures there are open avenues of communication as there evidently must be, avenues more open and numerous than between man and man, what valid objection can be urged to the belief that God, with his infinitude of knowledge of the structure of the human frame and the laws regulating its processes, and with his intimate and accurate acquaintance with its ever-varying environment, can by turning the currents of thought by means of timely suggestions, by firing the fancy, rousing the conscience, raising the hope, occasioning and confirming the purpose, and, by the even more mighty magnetism of such positive and such sympathetic personality as his must be, summon health or sickness, life or death, when and where he chooses?

Thus the Christian's creed that God can answer prayer if he so desires, if in his wisdom it seems best, that there are multitudinous ways in which he may indirectly or directly carry out the mandates of his will without destroying any force or abrogating any law, finds in the discoveries of modern science most abundant confirmatory and illustrative facts. It is only in the ill-founded theories and misinterpretations of some of the devotees of science that its claims have been denied. Christianity will some day summon science to the bar of the world's judgment as her strongest witness and most helpful ally.

## DOES PRAYER AVAIL?

### II

But, query our doubting Thomases, suppose you can thus show that scientific discoveries warrant a belief in the possibility of God's effectively interfering in the course of nature and in the affairs of men, have they not also suggested and finally confirmed the opinion that, in point of fact, he never has; that, from the very first, matter contained the promise and the potency of all life; that the world is simply an immense organism which has reached its present complex perfectness through inherent forces working under fixed laws of evolution; that the stages of its growth have been as regular and predetermined as those of a tree; that its social amenities, its arts and literatures, its ripened civilizations, have finally evolved out of the original amorphic fire-mist through precisely the same regular gradations of growth as those out of which the rich grape-cluster or the golden-sphered russet has come to crown the long energizings of the germ-force that at the first lay hidden within the walls of the seed? We return to this query a most decided negative answer, and will endeavor to establish, as the second point in our present argument, that God has actually interfered again and again; that his interferences have not been confined to any one age, but have been present in all ages; that his

will, by its creating and modifying power, has extended to all classes of phenomena; that his mandates are still being issued; and that their results, as asserted by recognized leaders in philosophy and in science, are present with us to-day.

We fully appreciate the array of learning we are called to confront in maintaining this position.

La Place, a supposed tower of strength in mathematical astronomy, seizing upon the suggestions of Sir William Herschel, propounded what is now known as the Nebular Hypothesis. In this he claims it possible that the worlds originated in a vastly diffused homogeneous fire-mist, which, on cooling and condensing into irregular flocculi, were thus thrown into a spiral motion until the whole mass was finally in a whirl; that from this mass rings were successively disengaged and condensed about nuclei into suns from which rings were again broken and condensed into planets, and from these still other rings were formed into moons. Following out this vast conception, and harmonizing with it, other scientists equally eminent have further asserted that out from this matter thus separated, solidified and grouped into systems there have been evolved by natural laws through successive grades of progression not only all the varient three score and more elemental atoms of the inorganic world, but also all the multiform manifestations of vegetable and animal life,—tracing human genealogy back to infusoria

and claiming that these at the first were but the spontaneous product of chemical action, molecular force being thus declared sufficient to account for the evolution of a molten mass into a peopled world.

Herbert Spencer in his "First Principles" expressly states that "those modes of the unknowable which we call motion, light, heat and chemical affinity are alike transformable into each other and into those which we distinguish as sensation, emotion and thought, solar heat being the final source of the force manifested in society," thus affirming not only that all the multiform varieties in inorganic nature but the still greater diversities in the higher realms of life have been evolved from strict homogeneity.

Professor Huxley in his paper on the "Physical Basis of Life" holds that protoplasm, consisting of carbon, hydrogen, oxygen and nitrogen in complex chemical union, is the very matter and basis of all life. Professor Tyndall in his chapter on "Vitality" near the close of his "Fragments of Science" remarks, "Are the forces of organic matter different in kind from those of inorganic? The philosophy of the present day negatives the question. It is the compounding in the organic world of forces belonging equally to the inorganic that constitutes the mystery and the miracle of vitality. The tendency indeed, of modern science is to break down the wall of partition between the organic and the inorganic, and to reduce both to



the operation of forces which are the same in kind but whose combinations differ only in complexity."

Professor Haeckel, the most distinguished and strenuous advocate of Darwinism in Germany, claims that in the present state of physiological knowledge the idea of a Life-Giver has become unscientific; that the admission of one primordial form is sufficient, and that that was a moner, consisting principally of carbon in the form of the white of an egg, of a chemical nature solely, and that this moner is the product of self-generation.

Professor Tyndall claimed that were our planet carved from the sun and set spinning around its axis and in its orbit as now, the consequence of its refrigeration would be the development of organic forces. "In an amorphous drop of water," he says, "lie latent all the marvels of crystalline force, and who will set limits to the possible play of molecules in a cooling planet?"

This is substantially the ground taken by Spencer, Huxley, Bain and many others of the evolution school.

These combined theories, essentially atheistic, rest, however, on a most insecure foundation, indeed encounter a host of incontrovertible facts which they are utterly inadequate to explain.

It may be admitted that at the first matter was formless, motionless, structureless and rayless. On this there is now no controversy among the different schools of thought. Moses and Herbert Spencer, the creationist and the evolutionist, the

dates of whose writings are separated by three thousand years, on this point clasp hands.

The belief is also as universal that this absolute simplicity of form and of nature has, after the lapse of ages, been converted into an almost infinite complexity, and that the cardinal changes have occurred in a certain order of sequence; but in answering the question as to how these changes have been effected, these schools of thought at once part company.

Those who affirm that in this unfolding there are no evidences of the active presence of an intelligent personal will-power are confronted by seemingly insuperable objections which science itself has furnished. Science discloses a law of inertia so far-reaching that not a single particle of matter in all the wide universe can set itself in motion. It also discloses that there is not a single particle that is now at rest. Whence that mighty initial impulse that thrilled through space and is still felt after the lapse of untold ages peopling the heavens with whirling worlds? Science also discloses that matter once supposed to be homogeneous is now made up of sixty-four or more different kinds of atoms, each inclosing within its walls, as we have already remarked, a force peculiar to itself, working under absolutely fixed conditions which no skilled chemist has ever succeeded in dislodging, or destroying, or changing in the minutest particular; each having all the characteristics of a manufactured article as

affirmed by Herschel, Faraday and Clerk Maxwell, and removed completely beyond the reach of nature's power or man's device to make or mar, alter or destroy. Out of these, through their mathematically exact chemical combinations, the whole inorganic world has been built. If there was once a time, as every evolutionist not only concedes, but stoutly contends, when every atom was precisely like every other, and not a single one had the faintest touch of attractive or repellent or affinitive force, through what instrumentality in some far past did these elemental forces, these individualized somethings, find birth and an abiding place within infinitesimal and indestructible walls of matter? We find on them no traces of development and no marks of decay. They are none other than God's immortals. Over the nature of their being, as well as over the cradle of their birth, there has been thrown a veil of mystery through whose closely woven meshes there comes no ray of revealing light to the anxiously peering eyes of science, and whose hiding folds no hand on earth has power to lift, except the reverent hand of faith.

Professor Tyndall acknowledges that of forces proper, the essential causes, science has no knowledge and concerning their nature and ways of working it can safely make no statement, that these forces are not mutually convertible modes of motion, the different manifestations of some one force (the law of conservation having been

mistakenly affirmed of them rather than of energies their phenomena), but are distinct spiritual entities possessed of an indestructible identity. His argument on this point, in which, controverting the generally received opinion, he cites the attraction of gravitation which increases and diminishes inversely as the square of the distance, and also atomic repulsion, has never been answered and is apparently unanswerable. Professor Faraday, in his remarks on the "Conservation of Force" says, that the commonly received idea of gravity appears to ignore entirely the principle, — indeed, to be in direct opposition to it.

Skilled specialists, after repeated trials to demonstrate that vitality may spring through spontaneous generation from dead matter, now candidly confess that all their efforts have thus far proved unavailing.

Huxley admits that "nobody has yet built up inorganic matter into living, organized proteine," — that "chemistry is an enormous distance from that goal," — that "the chasm between the living and the non-living the present state of knowledge cannot bridge."

Huxley gives a very interesting history of the utterly futile attempts of chemists to build this bridge. Dr. Bastian with tireless zeal has worked to this end, and thought he reached it, but in every one of his experiments there has been detected some fatal flaw. The declaration that no life springs except from some living germ has stood the most

crucial test of science. The lamented Agassiz affirmed this in his last lecture. Carpenter, Huxley, Tyndall, all the leading scientists, with refreshing candor, reaffirm it to-day.

With equal unanimity the world's savants point us to a fire period during which not only all the oceans and the soils, but the very beds of oceans, all the mines of metal and quarries of rock that form the earth, were once but drifting clouds of burning ether in whose fierce heat the hardest germ would instantly shrivel and disintegrate. Whence, then, those first eggs out of which sprang the progenitors of those countless multitudes of living organisms that have from age to age so peopled our planet?

The secret of the egg, its nature and its origin, quite as seriously puzzles and confounds the evolutionist as does that of the elemental atom. Within its walls there hides a wonder-working fairy. Though not secure from intrusion, as is the oxygen or the carbon force, she as successfully eludes the prying eyes of mortals and is wrapped in as deep a mystery as to what she is or whence she came. With the lenses and mirrors of his microscope, the scientist tries to look through the curtained windows of her palace. Baffled in that he presumes with subtle chemistry to bolt unbidden into her very presence, but the sprite, warned by the first footfall of the intruder, passes with viewless feet through some secret postern

gate into the unknown beyond, and never comes back again. After this he compounds in his laboratory the like chemical ingredients of which he has found the egg composed, and in precisely the same proportions, and then exposes this, his skillfully built protoplasm, to a carefully adjusted heat. Weeks pass, but no life. For a third time he finds himself facing failure. At last with humbled pride he accepts the truth that germinal force is not some property inherent in matter, but rather an organizing impulse introduced from without, separable at any time from the mass over which for a season it is made dominant, the product of a personal creative will whose impalpable thought it is commissioned to incarnate into living form.

Dr. Carpenter, late President of the Royal Society of England and member of the French Academy, in his paper on the "Correlation of Physical and Vital Forces" states that "the best physiologists of the present day separate into a distinct category vital phenomena, claiming them to differ *in kind* altogether from those of physics or chemistry." They are produced by what he styles germinal capacity, an inherent hereditary power within the germ, an agency whose office it is simply *to direct* in the use of light, heat, electricity, and the other elemental energies, and thus by their help build up matter into an organism answering to an ideal given it. The vital force

is held not to supply a single particle of energy but only to turn into its own individual channel a portion of what it finds outside.

Again, between not only the four primordial divisions of the animal kingdom and also the classes, orders and genera, but even the one hundred and thirty thousand different species, it has been demonstrated, after a century of most painstaking exploration and experiment, there have been great gulfs fixed which no natural, delegated force has power to pass. Within certain lines it has been discovered that species can be modified into varieties through climatic or dietetic influences or cross-breeding, but changes thus effected are found quite unstable, the parental types reappearing through the law of atavism when in new surroundings or removed from the culturing care of man. But, however, when an attempt is made to develop absolutely new, distinct species out of old ones, naturalists encounter in the law of the sterility of hybrids an uplifted iron hand, and hear a stern voice, saying, "Thus far, but no farther." That voice they are rapidly learning to recognize as the commanding voice of God.

Although the origin of species is a matter still in dispute among scientists, yet the theory of its being the result of direct Divine interference is championed by many advocates of profound learning and of international repute. The late Duke of Argyll who has won for himself front rank by his deep research and lucid expositions, while not

positively claiming such a conclusion, yet leaves upon the minds of all who read his volume entitled "Organic Evolution," the profound conviction that such was his real belief, that in his opinion such a solution of the problem was not only the most natural but well nigh the inevitable one. He says, "If mutations of species have occurred they must have been under some conditions and under some law of which we have no example, and can form no conception. Species have been quite as stable throughout all geological ages as they are at present. They continue till they die and then are often suddenly replaced by new forms and new patterns, all as definite and as persistent as before. How this takes place no man as yet can tell. The new species never seem to be mere haphazard variations from pre-existing forms. They never have the least appearance of the lawless mixtures of hybridism. On the contrary, the new forms are always as sharply defined as the old, differing from them by characteristics which are as well marked and as constant as all the predecessors in the wonderful procession of organic life."

While he informs us that Herbert Spencer admits that no man has ever yet seen a new species born by ordinary generation, he adds that the long ages of Palæontology give absolutely no clue, but that "in the Jurassic rocks composed of undisturbed deposits thirteen hundred feet thick, formed through the lapse of unnumbered ages,



no less than eighteen hundred and fifty new species have been counted, all suddenly appearing, all lasting for a time and then superceded by newer ones, that these medals of creation, struck each of them by a new die, do not imperceptibly merge into each other."

The origin of bodily organs is another of Nature's many secrets to which evolution theories furnish no key. These organs are found on examination to be contrivances of the most complicated character, combining often into a single group hundreds of closely correlated parts so nicely adjusted, so absolutely interdependent in many instances, that the absence of any one would not only seriously cripple the others, but render them totally inoperative, hopelessly defeating the purpose of the mechanism. These parts being thus unquestionably complemental one to the other and incapable of performing any useful office unless combined, their origin and present combination can be accounted for only as a projection into physical fact of an ideal previously conceived and matured by some organizing mind. It seems absurd to suppose that each part could have been originated independently, without any reference to the others, and slowly developed, in its own time and way, out of some minute, indefinite, fortuitous variations, either through the influence of its environment or through some internal blind force, into its present perfected and permanent form, and then that they all, through some chance

circumstance, should have fallen into each other's company, and have proved so exactly suited and so absolutely essential each to each as to become at last thus inseparably associated in close corporate work.

In the interior of the ear there is an immense number of minute, rod-like bodies, termed Fibres of Corti, having the appearance of a keyboard. Each fibre is connected with a filament of the auditory nerve. These shreds of the nerve are strings and the fibres are the keys that strike them. This is believed to be a keyboard in function as well as appearance, and through it not only melody but even harmony of sounds finds an avenue to the brain. Here, as Sir George Mivart suggests, is an anticipatory contrivance, for our progenitors had no wants in their simple modes of life which could possibly call into play an instrument of such unlimited resources of symphony; an instrument that has proved itself capable of interpreting to privileged multitudes the pathos and the rapture of a Beethoven and a Mendelssohn.

In the human eye there have been discovered by anatomists upwards of eight hundred distinct contrivances. Seven matched socket bones, a self-adjusting curtain with its delicate fringe of hair, a projecting eyebrow, six outer muscles of the ball, one of them geared through a pulley, oil and tear glands with an accompanying waste pipe, a hard, transparent, elastic cornea set in the

white sclerotica, an expanding and contracting pupil, an aqueous, a crystalline and a vitreous humor, an inward net work of nerves,—such are some of the more noticeable points of an instrument, which, in the ingenuity of its adjustments eclipses any invention of any human genius of any era. Note but one of its contrivances. By this its possessor can both thread a needle and sight a star. The sclerotic and choroid coats are filled with minute muscles which can flatten and press back towards the retina the crystalline humor and by the same movement change also the form and refracting power of the vitreous humor in which the lens lies. A reverse process can be effected with equal ease. Thus the ends which are clumsily, painfully, imperfectly attained by the apparatus of the astronomer and the microscopist are here secured without spherical aberration instantly and by simple volition.

It would seem impossible to account for the development of such a complicated instrument by means of a natural selection, according to the Darwinian theory, from among minute, indefinite, fortuitous variations, that selection being guided simply by the urgent demands of a struggle for life, for the instrument in order to be of any advantage in this struggle must have a concurrence of parts predicated a multitude of initial concurrent departures from the parental type.

Only on this concurrence comes the gift of sight, and the very fact that such an end has

been attained by such complicated means at the very outset before any selection can possibly take place, furnishes, it would seem, a complete answer to this theory. Even the simplest eyes, those that are fixed and angular and of least focal power, furnish us this argument in its full force, for not one of them is so simple but that even it is the resultant of simultaneous and corresponding growths of different parts, each of an independent origin and development, and each utterly useless until conjoined with the others in a symmetrical whole. Also at each advance step in compass and complexity the same difficulties confront the evolutionist, for each is made up of an entirely separate set of concurrent changes. It is a very significant fact that the trilobites, one of the oldest of fossil forms, to all appearance coming suddenly upon the scene, without as yet any discovered ancestry, possessed fully developed organs of sight.

In the face of such facts how can Professor Haeckel, the distinguished German exponent of Darwinism, insist that "the history of evolution convinces us that the highly purposive and admirably constituted sense-organs, like all other organs, have developed *without premeditated aim*."

Exploring parties of geologists, naturalists, and anatomists, after having with inexhaustible patience, with trained powers of observation, with most ingenious instruments of research, ransacked the rock record of earth's crust down through

even the Silurian strata to the very dawn of being, and having examined the present occupants of every continent and sea, now testify in the name of science that nowhere among extinct species or living ones have there come to light any facts proving that there were any such processes as evolutionists so boldly announce to have taken place in introducing the different gradations of sentient life on this planet.

The same is true of the many curious instances of mimicries in nature, and indeed of all phenomena of correlated growth.

Materialistic expounders of the universe also find themselves confronted on every side by the ever recurring phenomena of instinct and are at their wits' end to account for that perfect poise and mastery of body exhibited by some animals directly after birth, for that accurate intuitive knowledge of perspective, that minute familiarity with first witnessed scenes, that unrivaled ingenuity of design and flawless finish in mechanical execution of works performed without experience or a guiding model or the aid of instruction, that instantaneous grasp of the most occult principles in natural philosophy and profound acquaintance with the laws of chemical and vital action, and especially that far glance of prophecy on the accuracy of which depend the lives not only of individuals, but even of entire species. Theorists who cling to a naturalistic explanation denominate instinct a lapsed intelligence, affirming that

it is the accumulated wisdom of past generations acquired through painful and protracted experience and handed down under the laws of heredity in the form of fixed habits and of constitutional mental bent. But scientific investigations in natural history have brought to light thousands of facts to which such an explanation is wholly inapplicable, which fairly laugh these theorists down.

The solitary wasp brings to the mouth of a pit which she has dug with her mandibles and into which she has dropped an egg, a given number of small grubs so stung that their bodies, while smitten with paralysis, have just enough life left to keep them from decay until there shall issue from the egg the worm whose hungry maw they are fated to fill. This solitary mother wasp, with absolutely no experience or observation of her own or of others to guide her, acts as if she knew positively not only that a worm would some day be hatched from her egg but precisely when that day would come; that this worm would not have the faculty to care for itself and that she would never live to care for it; that grub-meat though unpalatable to her would be keenly relished by it, that a given number of grubs would suffice for its needs; and that they, shot through with her subtle poison, would lie dormant till it came.

The same acute discrimination may be observed in all insects in selecting for their egg deposits such surroundings as will most surely conduce to

the hatching and subsequent maintenance of their young, although the conditions of their offspring's life are in most marked contrast to their own. One will choose a particular kind of leaf, another the skin of a certain living animal, still another that of a certain dead one.

Guided by this parental instinct birds set out on their migratory journeys across entire continents, over pathless deserts and seas. Salmon exchange salt water for fresh, following far inland the courses of the rivers, at times shooting up steep waterfalls of great height and swiftness; the herring travel to the south, while the mackerel seek the colder currents of nothern climes. Is it possible that these animals, untaught and inexperienced, are so deeply versed in biological lore that they are enabled, by their own judgment, to determine unerringly the precise conditions fitted for the development of the embryo in the egg? And is it also possible for them to know in what localities they will find those conditions fulfilled, or for them to thread their way thither for the first time, without a guide, over prairies and sand-plains and tumbling ocean billows?

The spider that builds its tiny diving-bell, anchors it with strong cable to the river bottom, and distends its walls with air pressed from entangling meshes of web on its abdomen, and then, within this its royal pavilion, that shines through the water like a globe of woven silver, rears with watchful wisdom, amid seemingly most hostile sur-

roundings, its brood of hungry children, is another one out of the vast multitude of living witnesses that testify to a direct divine informing of the mental life below the human, the impulsive promptings of instinct being followed blindly by those creatures which stand thus in imperative need of its guiding wisdom. As well accredit an intelligent self-conscious purpose to those particles of matter which, when the time is ripe, arrange themselves with such promptness and precision along the lines of symmetry which form the faces of crystals or the exquisite patterns of flowers, as to ascribe to these lower orders of sentient being the knowledge, the invention, and the prescience which their works display.

There are other species of spiders, widely differentiated from this, yet exhibiting equally marvelous skill and prescience and intimate acquaintance with Nature's laws; some of which, while never spreading a snare, weave and securely anchor a single cable in order to effect a safe recovery after springing on their prey; others fashioning a sumptuous underground retreat, water tight, with plastered walls hung with most delicate silk tapestry, and with entrance guarded by a bevel-edged door swung on a spring hinge to make it self-shutting and secure against being crushed in by the heavy tread of any one who might chance that way; and still others which, having spun out of their own bodies veritable aeroplanes, boldly cut loose from the earth and



navigate the air whenever they choose to change their habitat. And there are many kinds of bees and ants, and other little denizens on the planet, that in their wonder-working bear equally unimpeachable witness to a Divine informing; but I will pass them by as they are more or less familiar to all, and will call especial attention to the startling case of the gall fly because of the profound significance of its history and its important bearing on the question at issue. Its convincing testimony has been hitherto strangely overlooked.

It starts out in life a worm, and a very tiny one at that, with nothing to do but eat and grow. It finds within ready reach the right kind of food prepared and stored away for it long before it was born. But as the monotonous hours creep by a wonderful metamorphosis takes place. Wings lift up out of its smooth skin, legs grow, its mouth changes, and, last of all, on the under side of the abdomen a long slender ovipositor appears spirally rolled up and lodged in a groove ready for use, terminating in most curiously fashioned tools fitted for tasks so various and so intricate that entomologists though prying into their secrets for a hundred years have discovered as yet only a part of them. After it reaches maturity and itself enters upon the duties of motherhood, it seems to know at once what instruments have been given it and precisely how to use them, for, spreading its wings, it soon alights on

the rough rind of an oak and begins at once to bore and rasp and brush and in many queer ways to irritate the tissues of the tree, and after this elaborate preparation it pours in and around the minute hole it has made in some branch an acrid concoction that has been compounded in the hidden laboratory of its own organism, and then deposits out of sight a minute egg,—that still unsolved mystery of the universe—and, flying away, leaves it to its fate.

Is it culpable carelessness for this mother gall fly to thus concern herself no further about the future happenings of that infinitesimal germ of life which has been so guardedly wrapped up with a deftness far surpassing that of the fancied fingers of fairies? Is she not rather blindly following the guidance of a wisdom and a kindly care not her own? Watch the result.

That mysterious liquid with which this insignificant insect saturates the tree's tough fibres seems to possess talismanic power, thrilling with a new strange impulse the heart of the old oak, quickening into activity latent architectural capabilities of the possession of which there has not until now been the slightest intimation. The oak at once sets about building for the egg of this strange intruder the most elaborate, complex, perfectly sheltered nest it would seem possible to devise. It consists of a round ball encased in a leather-like covering through which not a drop of moisture can penetrate, and hung out in

the light from the chosen branch by fastenings so secure and by a cord so strong no blast of wind can wrench it from its moorings. If you will cut open that ball you will find it to contain a central cell held in place by numberless radiating fibrous threads, and, thus embedded in granular pith, removed from out the reach of frost and all hostile forces; and in that cell, hard and smooth within and spacious enough for the newcomer to grow in, you will find the very egg this mother-fly had inserted into the old oak and left to its fostering care.

Not only has the oak been entrusted with this strange commission but the willow and the rose bush, the coriander and the Indian tamarisk as well, for they prove equally as prompt and as able to respond to the nesting needs of the favored fly. Each follows out its own architectural plans, but each builds to the same end. Galls hang about the catkins like bunches of grapes. They crop out from the roots capacious enough to comfortably house a thronging colony. Some galls have a prickly covering; some resemble artichokes; some, lumps of dried garden soil, as those on the tamarisk; some are like delicately tinted wax apples, as the famous apples of Sodom referred to in the ancient classics as found hanging from the boughs of dwarfed oaks in the desolate region of the Dead Sea. You may find them on grasses, and along the stalks of various sorts of grain. They are widely distributed and from their valu-

able dyeing properties have become important articles of a world-wide commerce.

These facts which I have here but very briefly cited, have undergone scientific scrutiny until now no well-informed person thinks of controverting them. They can be readily verified by any careful observer, and they are but a single group out of a vast multitude of corresponding and equally suggestive facts recorded in the books of naturalists. But their full significance seems largely to have been overlooked even by the most thoughtful interpreters of nature.

To only a single phase of their meaning do I purpose at present to direct attention. It relates to that oft mooted question of whether there are any unmistakable evidences of the exercise of special Divine will power to provide for the needs of any of the multiform varieties of sentient life that people this planet.

Note in the first place, how absolutely out of the ordinary is this phenomenon. Wound the oak or the willow, or the rose-bush in any other way, and pour into the wound any other kind of liquid, and the result will be, if the liquid be not poisonous, simply that the sap will flow out heedlessly until the curative forces of the tree heal the incision and the surrounding fibres are hardened into a knot. If an insect or an egg is caught in the flow it is ruthlessly swept along or embedded in its viscid current and its life smothered or crushed. If the tree is poisoned the deposited

egg may be saved from disaster by the arresting of plant growth immediately about it, as in the case of the locust sting. Let any innocuous foreign substance be lodged among the tissues and they will simply tighten about it with an intensified grip that never lets go, the substance becoming overgrown and imprisoned until the tree dies and the disintegrating chemical forces step in and tear down the walls of the palace which the life force had, cell upon cell, with such infinite patience and matchless skill built for itself out of the air and sunlight and the soil and the dew. Unless the gall-fly chances that way, the oak and the willow and the rose-bush and the tamarisk will go on year in and year out multiplying their branches in the same old way, putting on and off their coverings of leaves and maturing each their peculiar flower and fruit, and die at last without showing the least sign that power had ever been given them to execute any other commission.

With this single exception the energizing of every vegetive force is directed throughout the plant's entire history exclusively, either toward the conservation of its own life, or the perpetuation of its own species,—a case of self-seeking, pure and simple. Here, on the other hand, in most marked contrast is a case of altruism without one trace of self-seeking in it, the strange beneficence reaching over even into the boundaries of an entirely different kingdom.

Note, in the second place, the exhaustive knowledge of the present environment and sure prescience of the future needs of the new life, and the supreme mastery over all environing forces. How this architectural task is accomplished and by what device the egg reaches and keeps its ultimate central vantage-ground are, and probably will ever remain, among nature's insolvable mysteries. The plans and specifications for the building and best methods for carrying on the work were undoubtedly thought out to their minutest detail by the Infinite, Organizing Intelligence, and the skill needed for their successful execution was imparted and then held in reserve until just this emergency should arise, or else the specific impulse and the skill are the direct, instantaneous output of a Divine will. At all events there is no evidence of any slow, evolutionary process, of any gradual increase and refinement of power from crude, embryonic beginnings to final perfectness, wrought out, bit by bit, by successive exigencies extending over a long lapse of time.

Exactly how that strange concoction, with which the gall-fly saturates the woody fibres of the oak, suddenly awakens into intense activity these slumbering, undreamed of capabilities of the vegetive force and incite it to the accomplishment of a purpose so utterly foreign to its own necessities, what ingredient there is in it that imparts this magical power it would be futile for us to

attempt to conjecture. But we can see that the same Intelligence that planned the growth of the gall as a nesting place for the egg and the offspring of the fly, also planned the compounding of that potent fluid, equipped the fly with its working outfit, taught it how and where to inject this liquid, and established that deep correlation between the forces resident in entirely separate kingdoms whereby this exceptional service is secured in the life processes of nature.

How far-reaching, how complicate the plan! What infinite painstaking! What profundity of knowledge! What perfection of skill! The oak and the fly, what are they but blind instruments, unconsciously carrying out the purposes of a special, Divine beneficence? Let those theorists, who decry any belief in a special providence, explain, if they can, this circle of correlated phenomena on any other hypothesis.

But over the question of the advent and distinctive attributes of man the battle of the schools has been most hotly contested, calling into action on both sides every reserve force of scholarship and mental acumen, as the issues at stake transcend every other, involving not only the foundations of theistic faith, but even the very evidences of an endless life.

The extensive scientific investigations which have grown out of this heated controversy have brought to light a vast array of most interesting and significant facts to which the extreme evolu-

tionist and the equally extreme creationist have both gone for corroborative proofs of their theories, and neither of them gone in vain.

Man in his body, in his instincts, and in his mental traits, bears many very striking resemblances to the brute tribes, suggesting some closer tie than the strict creationist is yet ready to admit; although out of the lines of affinity with the numerous ape and lemuroid species that are by scientists classed with man in the sub-orders of primates, there could be constructed, as a distinguished writer has remarked, "only a net-work and not a ladder." There have also been found in man equally marked differences, suggesting, on the other hand, that in effecting the changes there were actively present higher forces than mechanical or chemical or even vital, and that there was introduced, as in the case of the atom and the egg, an absolutely new ingredient, of which there was no germ even, anywhere existing.

In man we miss the brute's great teeth and claws, we note fewer instincts, a lessened speed, a weakened muscle, a blunted sense, a back laid bare, a skin left tender; divergencies which would denote marked degeneracy were they not most strangely accompanied by a vastly increased mass and multiplied convolution of brain. Here appears that same deep correlation on which the parts of a bodily organ are built, bearing the same emphatic testimony to the prior existence, the



personal presence, and the plastic power of some intelligent, organizing will.

At the same time that the changes occurred in the body, corresponding ones must have reached the brain, for the one change without the other, as Darwin confesses, would have been a serious hindrance in the struggle for life, and, if his theory be true, could not have long survived. As in the formation of the eye and ear, modifications occurring at different starting-points, and each developing along an independent line, must have united in a concert of action before they could be of any advantage; so independent, synchronous, and corresponding changes must have taken place in both the body and brain of the brute to have produced the man, even waiving the question of his being distinctively endowed with a moral, accountable nature. Selection from minute indefinite variations, such as Darwin supposes, could have here played no part. Would creation be a misnomer for such a circle of changes? Brutes, though thus men's progenitors, could have sustained to them no closer relation than the soil to the flowers which open out from it their tinted and perfumed petals.

To be sure, there is here no change in the material ingredients. Neither is there any, when out of the soil a flower unfolds its tinted petals and fills the air with its fragrance; but as the soil, the moisture, and the sunlight have no power to thus combine into this marvel of grace and color

and sweetness until the directive force of some buried germ thrills them with its talismanic touch, so neither in the body of the brute nor in the nature of its environment dwells there any power known to science capable of producing such a circle of complemental changes, physical and vital, as mark the advent of man.

Furthermore, science in its explorations in the higher realm of thought has brought to light a class of phenomena so entirely novel as to indicate that there has taken place something more than a mere modification of the four forces, mechanic, atomic, vital and instinctive, which have been successively set at work in the world, that an absolutely new force has been ushered in, a force possessing characteristics so fundamentally different from all others that they can in no sense be regarded as its progenitors, and a force not only of a uniqueness so complete as to thus preclude any suggestion of kinship, but of a uniqueness so peculiar that it becomes a travesty on scientific interpretation to explain it simply as an unfolding under the universal law of evolution of another one of the hidden, inherent properties of matter. And this new force, known as a self-conscious and a responsibly sovereign *ego*, is apparently the exclusive inheritance of man, is his distinctive feature, lifts him completely up out of the low plane of brute being.

In the mental life below the human there are semblances of self-conscious, deliberative thought,

of moral discernment and responsible free-will; and instances of this nature are so many and so striking, the belief is prevalent, not only in scientific but even in religious circles, that we differ from the brutes only in having a clearer thought, a deeper discernment, a wider freedom; but there are now advanced investigators of the highest attainments and of international celebrity who believe that those semblances are wholly delusive, and that in this mysterious pantomimic life below us there are no really reliable evidences of the presence of a distinctive, self-conscious, spiritual force constituting true personality. Animals unquestionably possess in common with us blind instinct, sensation, direct perception, association of objects and ideas, automatic attention, involuntary memory, indeliberate volition, reproductive imagination, sympathetic emotion and emotional expression. Nearly, if not quite all of the phenomena of their thought-life can come through the exercise of just these low forms of mentality and do not necessarily imply that they ever get beyond the domain of the senses, that they have any abstract, deliberative, introspective thought, that their consciousness ever reaches up into consciousness of self. Their mental states may be, and probably are, simply passive; their memories and imaginations but prolonging and multiplying their sense-perception through laws of association and suggestion.

It is true there are some few phenomena that do

not seem susceptible of this explanation, but as we find clearly within the charmed circle of instinct, where there is uniformly nothing but blind obedience to a God-given impulse, acts which to ordinary observers show deliberation, design, profound reasoning, even moral purpose on the part of the animal, we naturally feel warranted in assuming that these occasional instances met with apparently outside of this circle, and indicating that animals at times really enter within the vestibule, at least, of self-conscious life, are delusive, that the real mental background to these unvoiced acts may after all be God's, and not theirs.

The belief that thus with the advent of man there was introduced an entirely new force, a spiritual, self-conscious, personal entity, seems to find further warrant in the fact that he alone has ever manifested a desire or shown a capacity for progress, intentionally improving on the past. Did animals really have souls in them, did they possess truly reflective faculties like our own, the developing influences of the tens of thousands of years, that have one by one rolled round since their life began, would have wrought in them an advancement so marked that their mental status would long since have been placed beyond all controversy.

That this non-progressiveness is not rightly chargeable to bodily imperfections is clearly evinced in the wonder-workings of the ant, the spider, and the bee. Apes have hands but they

have never yet built a fire or replenished one, or shaped a tool.

This belief finds still further warrant in the fact that with brutes instinct reigns; with man, reason; that they have their thinking done for them, he is forced to do his himself; that they reach perfection, without effort, at a single bound; he, if at all, only after repeated and disheartening failure; that with them the final purpose seems to be simply to conserve the body, with him, to improve the mind; that with them the supplying of physical wants brings unbroken peace, a deep content, the horizon of their thought shutting closely down about the now and the near; with him there is ever a vague unrest, an unsatisfied longing, an indefinable dread, angel-winged expectancies.

How can we account for God's pouring out such wealth of inventive thought in care for brutes' bodies and showing not the least concern, as far as we can see, for preserving and developing anything nobler, except on the ground that he has planted in them no germs of anything nobler to be developed, that he has never given them any real, personal self to be conscious of, that with them body is absolutely the very top of being?

While then there are strong suggestions, if not positive evidences in nature of some mysterious relationship between men and brutes, that relationship is certainly, as I have already suggested, as remote as that existing between the flower and

the soil out of which it springs. The dull clod has no magic gift of self-transfiguration but displays merely a capacity for a passive yielding to the plastic touch of some newly arrived vital force, when out of its well-nigh shapeless, scentless, colorless dust are wrought the queenly robes and peerless perfume and richly crimson blush of roses.

The investigations of science bring the certain knowledge of the direct action of the Divine will still closer to us, even within the circle of our own individual experiences. Sir George Mivart, Fellow of the Royal Society, who stands in the forefront of science, and Professor Rudolf Schmid, President of the Theological Seminary at Schonthal, Wurtemberg, who stands in the forefront of philosophy, claim that self-conscious and responsibly free spirits must be new and independent existences transcending nature, they going so far as to state outright that each human soul is the result of a separate creative fiat of the Almighty.

We might enforce this their position by remarking that out of the old nothing new can come except new combination, and the soul is believed to be an absolutely new element and not simply a new form of an old one. This our self-consciousness positively affirms, and we must implicitly rely on its testimony or our whole foundation for any belief is hopelessly swept away. It also says that each soul is an indivis-

ible unit, that there cannot be transmitted from parent to child any portion of the *ego*. Resemblances may be, but nothing of the child's spiritual entity has been or can be derived from his progenitors. Human souls are God's direct gift. To the fashioning of each one he has given his personal attention. It is only its fleshly coverings and its other material environment he has entrusted to the care of secondary causes.

Facts brought to light by modern scientific investigations and closely analyzed by modern scientific methods, are thus daily diffusing and deepening the belief among the candid and thoughtful that the progress through the ages from the simple to the complex, from amorphous matter to a peopled world, has been something more than a methodic, self-originated, and self-sustained evolution of elements held hidden in matter from all eternity, that absolutely new forces have from time to time been introduced from without through direct creative fiat of a personal will, the old forces, inside their limitations being, as the work progressed, utilized, when found available, simply as avenues for ushering in the new.

## DOES PRAYER AVAIL?

### III

We now come to the third general division of our theme, that God not only can effectively interfere, either by direct or indirect methods, without working any disorder, abrogating any law, or destroying any force; and that he not only has, in fact, thus interfered again and again in all ages and in countless matters of moment, but, further, that it is not only not presumptuous, but most natural and reasonable, for us to expect that he will interfere for *us* individually, however insignificant we may at present seem to be.

It is claimed by those who controvert this position, that God has, as we have already remarked, adopted broad, comprehensive plans, in which he has regard for general interests, and not exceptional cases; that in these plans he is as unyielding as granite; that his interferences have been in the nature of creative fiat, simply for completing these wide-reaching original designs; that he has no time or thought for individual cases; and that, if any one of us would secure any of the benefits of the present order, we must make these plans a careful study, and adjust ourselves to them as best we can, and not expect their author to break in upon them and give his personal attention to our private, insignificant interests. In other words, we must rely on our own exertions for any modi-



fications of our environments, must master the secrets of nature, comply with her laws, if we would make her forces our servitors and become masters of our circumstances.

There is apparent warrant for such a view. It would seem as if the individual were indeed lost sight of,—everything is on so vast a scale, every part of this wonderful mechanism of a world is so far-reaching in its results. The earth's whirl on its axis brings day and night for all; the inclination of its axis to the plane of its orbit and its circuit round the sun determine the change of seasons, the rise and fall of tides, the width of zones, the force and direction of the great trade-winds, the character and limitations of vegetable growths, the nature and habitat of the fishes, the birds and the beasts. The sun ceaselessly pours out in every direction that mysterious influence which we call light. It indifferently enters hovels and marble halls. It comes through every open doorway, every uncurtained window, every crack and crevice. It purples the velvet petal of the violet and fills it with fragrance, and afterward, with seemingly heartless haste, rots that same petal to shapeless, colorless, odorless dust again. It kisses the sheltered valley into waving harvests, and at the same time, with other of its rays, scorches the sand wastes with death's desolation and silence. At one time it darts in through the pupil of the eye, and with exquisite art transfers to the retina the outer glory and thrills the soul

with strange rapture; at another, when the delicate nerves are aflame with fever, it tortures with its touch, and blisters and blackens that very same canvas it had with its swift pencil painted with splendor. An atmosphere miles in thickness completely envelops the earth. It forces itself in everywhere. All gills and spiracles and lungs must breathe it, though sometimes it comes loaded with poison, instead of balm. Now with gentlest zephyr-touch it gratefully fans the cheek of an invalid, anon with the swift sweep of a cyclone it levels a forest or unroofs a city. Water is as omnipresent as air. The air is indeed permeated with it, as all substances, fluids and solids, have their every particle encased in air. What interminable leagues of tossing billows, with their glistening foam-caps breaking over the white-winged sea-gulls of commerce as they hasten on venturesome errands over the treacherous depths, some to reach safe shelter, it may be, in distant ports, some to fly wildly before an angry storm and sink into the opening jaws of a hungry sea! Fire, though not actually, yet potentially, is also omnipresent. Even the ingredients of water itself will burn, and in the fierce flame which their chemical union kindles, the metals and the earths, even fire-clay itself, will be consumed to ashes. Forests, grasses and peat bogs, underlying beds of coal, countless reservoirs of oil, are ready for the torch. Angels and demons of combustion are all about us. They stand in waiting on every hand,

ready with their ruddy faces to beam kindest cheer from our furnaces and chimney corners and swinging chandeliers, or to blaze in mad fury amid the crumbling walls and rafters of our homes. They will cook for our tables, smelt our ores, draw our trains of trade, turn the wheels in our workshops, multiply our comforts a thousandfold, or if we are not aware, will, as very fiends in their wild work of a night, change our proud Chicagos into smoldering ruins. In some far past the whole earth was but a burning ball, and lava streams and earthquakes and smoking craters tell us that the primal fires still rage within. This elemental force has been provided on a grand scale. The economic scheme of which it forms a part embraces the farthest fixed star in its infinitude of thought.

Electricity, the latest utilized force of nature, has been found to bear the same stamp of universality and to stand toward us in this same twofold relationship. It falls from the clouds in death-dealing thunderbolts; it also with deft fingers renders invaluable service in the civilizing arts of life. It becomes the winged Mercury of the mind, carrying thought-messages across continents and under seas with well-nigh the swiftness of light.

As we thus study nature force by force, attribute by attribute, and note this feature of universality pervading all, this dual relationship which each sustains of blessing or cursing, as angel or devil, how powerful and painful the

questioning, whether, after all, it is not too true that exceptional cases, or individuals during exceptional crises, have failed to enter as factors into the thought of God in the dispensations of his providence; whether individuals have not been placed in the midst of the same possibilities; and whether it does not rest with each to bravely make the best of his environment, and trust to his own right arm and stout heart to carry him through! And, besides, is not God's universe so wide, are not his cares so multitudinous and complex, that he has time to make only general classifications, establish wide-reaching laws, delegate great secondary causes, arrange his forces on a scale graduated with mathematical precision, and set them at work in grooves unalterably fixed? Is he not necessitated to take simply a sweeping glance, to contemplate in the mass the swarming myriads of beings evolved from the dust as the grand processes of life go on? Has he not thought it sufficient to establish the great dynasties of organized living creatures that through the ages have seemed to rise and sink with the regularity of the tides of the sea? We cannot even number the massive worlds which he has set whirling through illimitable space, and which must demand at least his general supervision and require his constantly sustaining power.

At first glance we are apt to conclude, viewing the subject from this standpoint, that there is indeed no individualizing in God's providences, no

attention paid to detail, no more note taken of the units that make up the mass than the farmer takes of the separate kernels of wheat which he harvests from his fields. Here moves by a cloud of locusts dense enough to darken the sun; an east wind rises and greedy ocean billows swallow them up. A volcano bursts, and a Herculaneum with its thronging human life is swiftly buried in a grave of ashes. There comes an earthquake shock, and a Sodom sinks into the sea; a steamboat disaster, a railroad accident, a visitation of cholera, a breaking out of fire, a caving in of a colliery, a whirl of a cyclone, and scores and hundreds of human lives perish in an hour. Is it probable that the individual arrests the attention of the Almighty in the great ongoings of his providence? Have you and I, in our little corner, ever attracted his attention, much more excited his interest? Has his great heart ever beat in love for each one of us? Has he ever called us by some dear name and watched with tender solicitude the unfolding of our powers, entered into sympathy when our hearts have bled with bereavement, or been crushed with failure, or made desolate by estrangement or unfeeling neglect? How many hours in the life history of every one of us are darkened by a sense of utter loneliness! How many times our hearts cry out for the appreciative sympathy of a Divine companionship! Oh, for that comforting assurance which blessed Christ's sorrow-wrung heart when he said, "And yet I am not alone, for the

Father is with me" ! Is it presumptuous for us to think that that assurance may also be ours? That it is not, I believe to be the unmistakable teachings, not only of the Sacred Scriptures, but of all animate and inanimate nature and of all sound philosophy.

The Scriptures are full of this consoling revelation. There is rarely a page not illuminated by it. To teach it was one of the distinctive features of Christ's ministry. How he delighted to dwell on the brooding watchfulness of the Father ! In reassuring his disciples he told them that God, who gave his personal attention to the clothing of the grass and the lilies, and was not so great or so busy as to overlook the fall of even a little sparrow, surely would keep loving and sleepless watch over them. Even the hairs of their heads, he confidently assured them, were all numbered.

Such like disclosures, so many and so explicit, throughout the books of the Bible, find most abundant confirmation in the facts of science. The geologist and the chemist, the botanist and the naturalist, have in their separate departments found phenomena which the Christian philosopher may boldly claim as incontestable evidences of God's sympathetic presence with his children. The more deeply nature is searched, the more convincing the proofs of God's infinite painstaking for his creatures. His plans to these ends have evidently been thought out in their minutest details. We are overwhelmed with astonishment as

we see into what small concerns he has suffered his thoughts to enter, and out of them by an ingenuity of contriving possible only to a creator of limitless resources has wrought results of far-reaching import. No candid student of nature can fail of becoming profoundly convinced that there is absolutely nothing, however inconspicuous, that does not only embody a divine thought, but in some way plays a part in carrying out the promptings of a divine love.

If any one in his hours of depression is haunted with the feeling that he is too insignificant to attract God's personal attention, much more be the object of his constant loving care, he will find himself wonderfully reassured if he will lay down the telescope and take up the microscope, for he will soon see that the fault is all in himself, in that he has had a far too meagre conception of God's thought-range and breadth of sympathy. Such an examination will disclose to him that, as a positive fact, God has somehow found abundant time, notwithstanding the multiplicity and the magnitude of the interests of his vast universe, to give his personal attention to the equipping and provisioning of beings of infinitesimal minuteness. That mighty hand in whose hollow the heavens are held, has also sufficient delicacy and precision of touch to fashion the finely reticulated wing of the ephemeron. The same art-conception and marvelous skill that paint the sunset and bend the rainbow have touched with most brilliant

pigment each feather in the plumage of the fly. The same musician who has also conceived the grand organ harmonies of ocean billow and thunderburst, has also adjusted, part to part, with loving care, that sweetest of musical instruments, the throat of the skylark, whose wild rapture of song so thrilled the ethereally gifted Shelley that he immortalized it in verse as the blithe spirit-voice of the air.

God apparently shows not only the same infinitude of care, but the same keen personal delight, in his works in the domain of the minute as in that of the vast and the mighty. Look deeply as we may into nature with our most powerful artificial lenses, even to the very microscope-limit, we can detect no hasty oversight, no cold indifference, but exhaustlessness of patience and lavishment of thought, and in every detail of each work an absolute faultlessness of finish. Illustrations of these comforting truths abound all about us. The world is full of them, but I have time to cite only two or three.

There is a class of microscopic animals, the Diatomaceæ, which have existed in such vast numbers that entire mountains have been found composed of their remains. The forms of their infinitesimal shells when magnified are discovered to be of most exquisite beauty and of every conceivable pattern. "In the same drop of moisture there may be some dozen or twenty forms, each with its own distinctive pattern, all as constant as



they are distinctive, yet all having apparently the same habits and without any perceptible difference of function." Neither sexual nor natural selection has, so far as we can discover, any governing influence here. In these varied beauties are there not evidences, which scientific theorists have so far failed successfully to controvert, of God's giving his personal attention to the adornment of the minutest of his creatures, to his conceiving and embodying in innumerable faultless forms and pleasing combinations of tints his conceptions of beauty? How this infinite painstaking has benefited these mysterious specks of life, we have no means of determining. Perhaps they come and go without having the faintest intimation of the symmetries and colorings which the Divine Architect and Artist has, by the interposition of direct will power, introduced into their calcareous palace homes. We cannot prove that it was for their especial benefit these patterns and paintings were designed. Perhaps the ultimate purpose was the æsthetic culture of inquiring human souls, or it may be that other and even higher ends will come to light in some after age. Certain it is such painstaking implies a purpose, and whether we can discover it or not, the fact brings with it, to every thoughtful mind, with overwhelmingly convincing force, that God is personally conversant with, and has taken an active personal interest in, the life-furnishings of creatures so minute that their individual forms are to us ab-

solutely invisible without the aid of the microscope, and so low in the scale of being that naturalists are still divided in opinion as to whether they are animals or plants.

The inorganic world equally abounds in illustrative proofs of this same comforting truth. I will select a single one. The luminous flame that has brightened human homes through all civilized centuries is an aeriform chemical combination of hydrogen with oxygen and carbon. The difference in the degree of inflammability of the first two gases is the cause of all the illuminating properties of the flame, and yet that difference is so slight that the times of their ignition are separated by a period absolutely imperceptible to our unaided senses. The hydrogen takes fire a very small fraction of a second before the carbon, and as it unites with the oxygen of the air it lets go its chemical hold on the carbon, which the instant it is thus released changes from a gas to a solid, so that into the colorless flame of hydrogen is constantly being showered the finest carbonic dust. These minute particles become little glowing coals emitting a brilliant light just for an instant and then, like the hydrogen, spring into the chemical embrace of the all-devouring oxygen. The infinite painstaking here displayed, the delicate nicety of adjustment, the critical attention to the minutest details, are no less astounding than the world-embracing beneficence of the results.

The case of the little brown water-spider, to which brief allusion has already been made, is the only other illustration I shall have space to give of God's personal, painstaking care over the minutest matters in his kingdom. In common with the numerous species of this order of articulates which abound in all parts of the world, this diminutive creature has had given to it four pairs of seven-jointed legs, the last joint armed with two hooks toothed like a comb, frontal poison-fed claws, eight eyes and a multitude of spinnerets from whose infinitesimal openings issues a glutinous liquid which the instant the air strikes it hardens into threads invisible from their fineness until they are massed together into a single, strong, elastic cable. But it has furnishings and instinctive impulses peculiarly its own. Its body has a thick covering of hair which it has been taught to most curiously utilize. Strange to say, this air-breathing animal is prompted to build its home and rear its little ones on the beds of streams, and the devices by which it has been enabled to surmount what to us would seem insuperable obstacles may well fill us with admiring wonder. It weaves a diving-bell, air-tight, mouth downward, and ties it tightly to the bottom. Then coming to the surface it covers its hairy abdomen with fine web, lies on its back until all the interstices between the hairs and the meshes of web are filled with air, swims under the bell, presses out into it the entangled air, comes again to the surface, and re-

peats the process, until all the water at first in the bell has been displaced, and the bell made habitable.

In all this procedure the spider has unquestionably been guided by him who equipped it. No candid and appreciative observer can fail to note this, for what, can it be imagined, first determined it, supposing it to be following out its own thinking, thus to locate its nest under water, for it has no gills fitting it for such a habitat, or how did it study out so ingenious a method for making such an undertaking possible? The inventor of this bell must have known that air is lighter than water, that it can be mechanically retained in fine fabrics, and that when introduced into an inverted receiver it will crowd out the water, instead of being absorbed by it. Has this spider been so close a student of nature as to have discovered these laws of physics, and is it so gifted an inventor as thus ingeniously to have applied its knowledge, without either instruction or experience? This daintiest of palaces must have been thought out in all its details before the spider began spinning its first thread, for the weaver shows no hesitancy and makes no mistake. It must also have been the work of a single mind, for its parts are so intimately correlated that the absence of a single one would not simply obscure the conception, it would totally destroy it. There must be either perfection or flat failure. This alternative was presented to the first spider of the

species. I would like to show, had I time, how this little creature is also equally blessed with Divine guidance as to how and where it shall deposit its eggs, how enwrap them in clusters with silken cocoons for protection and warmth, when and how to release the tiny babies from their coverings and transport and feed them when first they come, as they are sure to do, in swarming and hungry companies.

The equally marvelous prescience and skill displayed by all instinct guided creatures and their equally marvelous equipment for their work, afford us illustrative proofs without number of God's most intimate acquaintance with, and loving care for, the momentary interests of earth's speechless, soulless, perishing myriads. Neither their implements nor their skill can be accounted for as the slow outcome of stern experience, for their instinctive promptings are followed blindly, and their wisdom and skill antedate experience, and are independent of the aids of instruction or of any working model. To the progenitors at least of every animal species, there has come a direct divine impressment and informing. New wants with correspondingly new implements and new instinctive impulses issued from the creative will of the Almighty. Provision was doubtless made at the incoming of each species for the transmission, through the laws of heredity, of such traits as should constitute its distinctive endowment, and

thus a general supervision over each species instituted.

But still more specific provision seems to have been made to cover exceptional necessities, to answer the demands of exceptional crises in the individual lives of the seemingly most insignificant. There appears to have been left a certain latitude of modification and amendment of instinctive promptings. As I have already remarked, animals unquestionably possess, in common with us, not only blindly followed instincts, but sense-perception, association of objects and ideas, automatic attention, involuntary memory, indeliberate volition, reproductive imagination, sympathetic emotion, and emotional expression. Though the phenomena of their thought-life may be classed under these lower forms of mentality, though they may never rise to deliberative, abstract, introverted thinking, may never attain to self-consciousness, having no self to be conscious of, may never have the clear light of reason or ever exercise a responsibly free choice, yet they do seem to have had some means provided for supplementing instinct in those peculiar emergencies for which no general provision through instinct could be secured. This clearly evidences to us that God's providential care, even over the lowliest, extends beyond the segregated mass that constitutes the species to each separate individual in it, and even to that individual's exceptional needs. The thinking here displayed, though outside the circle of

instinct proper, will still be found, on final analysis, to be God's, and not theirs.

To receive the full force of this comforting truth, we must keep in mind that all this loving care is taken for creatures of a day, who are here hemmed in by simple sense, and who have promise of no tomorrow; and we must also keep in mind, what science has not only conclusively demonstrated, but illumined and glorified by its extensive researches, that man is a microcosm, the crown of creation, the consummate flower of all the ages, that it was for him this world was provided with its mineral deposits, rock-quarries, and coal beds, with its vast reservoirs of oil, its dense forests and waving grain and grasses, with its flocks and herds, with its mighty elemental forces, with its flower-petals, its arching rainbows, and its painted skies.

It was to secure for him, nature's sceptered king, a fitting environment, that all the mighty processes of evolution had been carried on through all the untold geologic eons of forgotten time, and it was for him earth was fitted up, not as a permanent home, as the all-in-all of his existence, but simply as a first year's training school for powers which, though barely budding now, have in them the promise and the potency of an endless life and of a divine likeness. A single deathless human soul outweighs in worth ten thousand worlds of lower sentient life.

The now widely studied, though still very imperfectly understood, sub-conscious mind widens

vastly our conceptions of the exalted and inexhaustible resources of the human spirit and furnishes new and unmistakable evidences of its immortality. Recent researches in psychology reveal to us that this spirit in this submerged realm never tires, never sleeps, that it is far-reaching in its activities even when the wearied bodily organism is wrapped in profoundest slumber, that it ceaselessly carries on the vital chemistries of the body, building up and maintaining its bony framework and many different tissues out of the mass of crude material furnished for its fashioning, that it lifts the curtains of the future in premonitory dreams, that no idea or incident once made known to it ever fades from its memory, that by some subtle system of mental telegraphy it sends its messages out over continents and rolling seas, that it even measures vast distances in projecting its personal presence in times of mortal stress as if transported on the wings of angels, that it reaches out with clear vision and with dynamic power without the intervention and beyond the limits of the body, that it banishes under the laws of suggestion many forms of disease almost instantly even in cases in which skilled physicians have met with discouraging failure, that it has filled every department of human thought and activity with the inexplicable dazzling splendor of the works of genius.

In reading authentic accounts of its achieve-



ments it is hard for us to realize that we are not in fairy land, that there are not being rehearsed to us extravaganzas equal to those in the Arabian Nights' Entertainments. But the more we search the carefully prepared scientific records of its achievements, astounding though they are, the more we are convinced of their verity and their deep significance. We have here at hand an Aladdin's magical lamp that can uncover to us hidden treasures of priceless riches and place at our bidding slave genii of wonder-working power.

But while the evidence shows us conclusively that such marvelous capacities have been placed in our keeping yet it also shows that they have been reserved in large measure for some other life beyond, from the very fact that only under exceptional supernormal conditions are occasional glimpses of them now possible, that only very partial use is placed as yet within our reach and that they are hung about with such a cloud of impenetrable mystery. To its magical workings in the field of therapeutics we have already directed attention. It will suffice, perhaps, for our present purpose to call attention more especially to but a single one of its other manifestations, the one last mentioned, that of the conceptual, creative powers of genius. Here we have a glimpse at least, and can form perhaps an approximate estimate of God's priceless gifts to us and of his far-reaching designs concerning us during the coming endless years, and may be able to dismiss all further doubt

of our being worthy in his eyes of unremittent care during this the formative first period of our existence.

The wide differences among men in the *degree* of endowment, apparent to-day, are, for our comfort be it spoken, but the temporary accidents of perishable, inadequately equipped bodies, and of a temporary world-environment.

Difference in *kind*, without conferring precedence in point of worth, but simply promoting and assuring pleasurable variety, will probably always remain, but differences in degree will depend upon the future determining power of the human will, for each incarnate spirit is one of God's immortals, in whose germinal nature is wrapped up the incalculable possibilities of an endless growth.

The distinguishing characteristics of genius are spontaneity, power to create, sudden and unanticipated revelations of the deepest secrets in nature and life, bright, unbidden concepts in mathematics, in music, poetry, sculpture and painting, in oratorical achievement, in military strategy, in farseeing statesmanship, in every department of thought and action.

The uneducated boy Colburn, by processes of computation which he never could explain, which were as much a mystery to him as to every one else, would give the cube roots of the largest numbers offered him almost instantly, with unvarying accuracy, without pencil or paper, seemingly with-

out any mental effort. His mind through some unknown automatic action, through some intimate acquaintance with the laws of numbers, too profound for our fathoming, instantly reached results which in the ordinary way would require long, tedious, complicate calculations.

I distinctly recall a case cited in one of my college text books on mental science of a distinguished professor who, puzzling one evening without avail until bed time over the solution of a problem in higher mathematics, at last in a fit of discouragement threw his paper aside and retired to rest. In the middle of the night his wife being awakened by some noise in the room, discovered that her husband, though still sound asleep had returned to his desk. After a time he went back to bed with his sleep still undisturbed. In the morning to the astonishment of them both they found the whole solution in all its stages carefully written out in the dark on the papers left lying open on his desk. He never afterward could gain the slightest recollection of ever having during the night raised his head from the pillow.

The author, the artist, the musical composer, all creative geniuses, oftentimes confess that they cannot explain how their best works are produced; that they can never by directly willing it attain to the same degree of creative freedom; that the divine afflatus is at times very coy, then again it comes unbidden and is excessively domineering and persistent until the record is made; that in inspired

moments some power, apparently outside themselves, gains control; that the clearest vision of intricate situations and the most surprising facility of expression are suddenly placed at their disposal, they little dreaming that up from the fathomless depths of their sub-conscious being come these haunting phantoms and these most surprising powers.

Helen Hunt Jackson, whom Emerson pronounced one of the best, if not the best, poets America has produced, in describing to a friend the origin and the writing out of *Ramona*, that superb Indian story which was the consummate flower of her genius, and on which her fame will ultimately rest, wrote, that for three or four years she had longed to embody in a telling fiction her conception of the red-man's claim upon the white man who was heartlessly crowding him off from his hunting grounds, but that she had hopelessly brooded over the theme, being utterly unable to formulate a plot, or conceive of the proper local coloring for background "until," as she relates, "one October morning before I was wide awake the whole plot flashed into my mind — not a vague one either,— the whole story just as it stands to-day, in less than five minutes, as if some one spoke it. I sprang up, went to my husband's room and told him. I was half frightened. From that time till I came here it haunted me, becoming more and more vivid. I was impatient to get at it. I wrote the first of it December First. As

soon as I began to write it seemed impossible to write fast enough. In spite of myself I wrote faster than I would write a letter. I write two to three thousand words in a morning and I cannot help it. It racks me like a struggle with an outside power. I cannot help being superstitious about it. I have never done half the amount of work in the same time. Ordinarily it would be a simple impossibility. Twice since beginning it I have broken down utterly for a while, with a cold ostensibly, but with great nervous prostration added.

“What I have to endure in holding myself away from it, the afternoons I am compelled to be in the house, no words can tell. What do you think? Am I possessed of a demon? Is it a freak of mental disturbance or what?”

It is related of this gifted author that during her last illness immediately on waking one morning a new exquisitely finished poem monopolized her thoughts and pressed for utterance. She recited it to her attending physician when he called, and asked for an explanation as to its origin, apparently surmising it to be a premonition, a masked prophecy, of her fast approaching fate.

Longfellow has kindly lifted the curtain for us as to the origin of some of his poems. “The Arrow and the Song” came into his mind he tells us instantaneously. “My Lost Youth” occurred to him in the night after a day of pain and was written out the next morning. On an-

other occasion at midnight he was sitting by his fire when suddenly it was suggested to him to write the Ballad of the Schooner Hesperus "which," he says, "I accordingly did. Then I went to bed but could not sleep. New thoughts were running in my mind and I got up and added them to the ballad. It was three by the clock when I had finished. I then went to bed and fell asleep. The poem hardly cost me an effort. It did not come into my mind by lines but by stanzas." He had a similar experience in writing "The Beleaguered City" and "The Lock of Edenhall."

Rev. Dr. Stowe recently related in his lecture on "Uncle Tom's Cabin": "My mother had not the faintest idea what she would write about until one day she was in church and suddenly the whole scene of Uncle Tom and Legree floated before her eyes. She broke into a fit of uncontrollable weeping. When she reached home she went up to her room and immediately wrote out that familiar chapter, 'The Death of Uncle Tom,' over which, we may add, the whole reading world has since shed many a sympathetic tear.

Coleridge's "Kubla Khan" sprang into being during the hours of profound sleep. What has been preserved is but the merest fragment of his vision, for while eagerly writing down the stanzas as he recalled them he was suddenly summoned out on business and detained for over an hour, and on his return he found that only eight or ten scattering lines, out of the two or three hundred

which he was confident had been thus composed without conscious effort, would answer to his summons. This dream-born poetic rendering of his vision had fled from him forever.

Robert Louis Stevenson, in his paper on "Dreams," tells us that even his hours of sleep were thronged with the little Brownies, breathing out their loves and hates, which in his pages he has so vividly limned into life. Indeed, then it was in these very hours his creative faculties wrought with greatest intensity, with most overmastering power. Dickens could not keep back the throng of strange folk that peopled his imagination. They would come apparently without his bidding. He would listen with rapt attention to their sprightly conversations as if they were palpable personages in the real world outside himself instead of the airy nothings to which he had given a habitation and a name.

It is said of Schubert that "year after year he wrote music of indescribable beauty in such enormous quantities that but for the dates on the manuscripts we could not credit the account of his biographers. He wrote because when his genius inspired him he could not refrain. His pieces were produced by hundreds and with a rapidity bordering on the miraculous, seven or eight in a day. He never repeated himself. Every production was the result of a new inspiration, committed to paper at the moment of conception, and all

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received worthy treatment and bore the unmistakable imprint of genius."

Blind Tom, having no capacity whatever for training, whose objective mind was an idiotic blank, astonished the world by his exhibition of a wonderful gift, being able to accurately reproduce the most difficult classical compositions on the keyboard of the piano, and even to improvise at will productions of remarkable excellence.

At the opening of the last century Toussaint d'Overture, the Haytian Liberator, who had been a slave until fifty, astonished the world by his energy and matchless genius in battle.

The English were driven from every stronghold, twenty-eight Spanish forts in four days, fell before his advancing columns; he maintained against an allied enemy long lines of impregnable defense, successfully besieged St. Mark and closed the campaign by English capitulation and the retreat of the Spanish forces. Napoleon, the First Consul of France, fearful of the rising splendor of the negro chieftain sent against the Island thirty thousand veterans and upwards of sixty war ships, dreaming of easy triumphs and the re-enslavement of a free people. His generals long drilled in war and fresh from conquests on the continent, here at last found a master. In the conflict that followed ten thousand of Napoleon's trained soldiery were slain, and the disordered remnant of his defeated forces fell an easy prey



to the galling fire of the mountain marksmen. Only by cowardly intrigue, by treacherous appeal to the most generous impulses, by empty professions of friendship and by lying promises of liberal rule, did this ambitious, cold-blooded despot of France at last prevail.

Toussaint could have truthfully said in the beautiful words of the Eastern fable, "I was but common clay until roses were planted in me."

Sir William R. Hamilton evolved the intricate conception of the invention of quarternions while walking with Lady Hamilton in the streets of Dublin, the flash of discovery coming to him just as he was approaching the Brougham Bridge.

Mozart had the aria of the beautiful quintette in the "Magic Flute" revealed to him while playing a game of billiards and seemed prepared for such occasional influxes of musical ideas by carrying a note book for their instant record. When he was but thirteen years old he composed an opera and directed it. He wrote of himself, "If one has the spirit of a composer he writes because he cannot help himself. Whence and how my ideas come, I know not nor can I force them. Those that please me I retain. They fire my soul, the subject enlarges, becomes methodized and defined, and the whole, though long, stands almost complete and finished in my mind so that I can survey it like a fine picture or a beautiful statue at a glance. Nor do I hear in my imagination the parts successively but as it were all at once."

“An inventor suddenly conceived the proper way of constructing a prism for a binocular microscope, a problem which he had long thought of and abandoned, while he was reading an uninteresting novel.”

The late Mrs. Julia Ward Howe, in describing the way in which that majestic, inspired Battle Hymn of hers happily characterized by another as a “swinging, splendid lyric, the war song of militant righteousness,” sang itself into being while she slept, remarks, “The road was so filled with soldiers that our return from the parade ground to the city was very tedious, and to pass the time away we sang ‘John Brown’s Body.’ Some of the marching regiments took it up and it was passed along the road until the echoes reverberated for miles. My pastor asked me why I did not put the spirit of ‘John Brown’s body lies a-mold’ring in the grave’ into some graceful and expressive words. I told him I had tried. One morning soon after that I awoke suddenly about daylight and the lines I wanted were running vaguely through my mind. I arose and wrote them down. They were published in the Atlantic Monthly and the editor named them ‘The Battle Hymn of the Republic.’”

The astounding achievements of this secretly working sub-conscious self are almost past belief. They are so significant and suggestive in the present discussion I cannot refrain from adding two or three more to the number already recited.

W. Poole, F. R. S., in describing how Bidder could determine mentally the logarithm of any number to seven or eight places says, "He had almost a miraculous power of seeing, as it were, intuitively what factors would divide any large number, not a prime. Thus if he were given the number 17,861 he would instantly remark it was  $337 \times 53$ . He could not, he said, explain how he did this, it seemed a natural instinct to him." Bidder himself remarks, "Whenever I feel called upon to make use of the stores of my mind they seem to arise with the rapidity of lightning." Prof. Safford, Mondeux Prolongeau and others relate similar experiences. Buxton would talk freely while mentally performing his intricate calculations, that being no molestation or hindrance to him.

Sir John Herschel's Experience in Geometrical Spectres led him to remark that "we have evidence of a thought, an intelligence working within our organization distinct from our ordinary personality."

M. Sully Prudhomme, at once a psychologist and a poet, says, "I have sometimes suddenly understood a geometrical demonstration made to me a year previously without having in any way directed thereto any attention or will. It seems that the mere spontaneous ripening of the conceptions which the lectures had implanted in my brain had brought about within me this novel

grasp of the proof. A like personal history is given by Arago and Cardillac.

George Sand, the famous French novelist, tells us that "in the act of writing she felt a continuous and effortless flow of ideas, sometimes with and sometimes without an externalization of the characters who spoke in her romances." Mrs. Gamp, Dickens' greatest creation, persistently thrust her voluble personality upon his attention especially in church when he was in the act of worship.

Very recently Professor W. Bert Reese a German resident of New York City, exhibited, under exceptionally guarded conditions, powers of clairvoyant sight and mind reading in the presence of such trained investigators as the famed inventor Thomas A. Edison, a pronounced skeptic as to immortality and the existence of a soul, and of Dr. Wm. H. Thompson, author of the book entitled "Brain and Personality," and others alike eminent in intellectual circles. It was the unanimous verdict that the Professor actually possessed these marvelous powers which to them were utterly inexplicable. Edison simply placed the strange phenomena in the same category with the feats of mathematical, musical, mechanical, and literary prodigies, as results, all of them, of some super-development of senses and gifts that will some day in the further evolution of the race come out into the open. But as I have already remarked, does

not the very fact that thus far through all the past ages they and other occult powers have been largely the product of abnormal states, rarely, very rarely, tractable and serviceable in this present life, only occasionally and very imperfectly displayed, thus dimly intimating that there are hidden away, somewhere in some way, vast stores of mental wealth, with little or no advance in the unraveling of their mystery, does not this fact warrant us rather in the belief that they are being purposely held in reserve as promises and prophecies of some other larger, fuller, freer life beyond?

I will not further multiply instances of the magical workings of this submerged self, although they brighten every age of human history and are to be met with in every walk in human life.

I would not have given as many as I have were I not especially impressed with their deep significance and solicitous to place upon them the emphasis which is their due, for right here in this very realm of the sub-conscious self, this mystery-shrouded border-land of the spirit, the birth-place of intuitions, we cannot help but see of what priceless worth is every separate human soul, we can all but catch the sound of angel-voices, we come into closest touch with the Infinite.

Having described at some length in my answer, elsewhere to the question, "Was Christ Divine?" the discoveries and conclusions of science as to man's place in nature, and having no space here for its general discussion, I will content myself

with the simple statement that the more profoundly phenomena have been studied by scientists and scientific philosophers, the more clearly and gloriously has it been revealed that God has been busied through untold ages in preparing for man's advent, that man has been the grand goal of his endeavor, the ultima Thule of his creative thought on this planet; that all this prolonged preparation could not have been merely to render comfortable a short-lived and low-planed animal existence, that this patient approach could not have been to a consummation so inconsequential and unworthy, but that he for whom the centuries have been so long waiting and to whose coming they have been pointing with prophetic finger, who fulfills the types, completes the prophecies, wears the crown, surely was not born to die; that he who has proved himself capable of unraveling the intricacies and following the vast sweep of the Divine thought as is evidenced by his discoveries in science, his classifications of knowledge, his advancement in the arts, his rapidly approaching universal mastery and ingenious utilization of nature's forces, his unconscious duplicating of God's thought-processes as incorporated in the lives of the world's silent, instinct-guided workers and in the mechanism of their bodies; he who has proved himself capable of so apprehending the spirit of God's vast creative plans as to be able to become his sub-creator, noticeably multiplying and improving the products of vegetable and animal life,

making the waters swarm, turning deserts into gardens, developing the crude possibilities of untamed nature; he whose whole being can thrill with harmonies of sound, of form, and of color, and who has not only reproduced them but carried them to grand exaltations in oratorio and sculptured marble, speaking canvas, cathedral pile, and landscape gardening, and has laid all matter and even all force under tribute to his æsthetic tastes; he who can thus enter with keen appreciative zest and assimilative capacity into the thought-life of God; and, finally, he who has had entrusted to him, what far transcend everything beside, the responsible gifts of moral discernment and liberty of choice, out of which alone character can come, surely must have reached, in point of privilege, the very top of being, and must possess in living germ the very attributes of God himself, with all the golden possibilities of growth in God's eternal years.

When we thus attempt to measure the worth and dignity of man, we must also keep in mind that each individual soul comes fresh from the Creator, and is not simply the product of processes of evolution begun in some far age and perpetuated by secondary causes which God has long since ceased to superintend and to whose general outcome alone he has ever directed attention. The soul's environment, its body and its wider surroundings are, indeed, the result of such processes, but each soul is in itself a unique spiritual entity,

bearing the imprint of a distinct personal purpose, and constituting the embodiment of some cherished ideal, some fond anticipation, some sacred love, right out of the very throbbing heart of God.

The drift of the centuries has been to an ever more complete development of individuality; it has been a progress from homogeneity to heterogeneity; such has been the history of evolution from the dawn of time, as Spencer, Huxley, and thinkers of that school have, through learned and brilliant treatises, informed the world.

It is not the great mass as such that excites God's loving interest, but the individualized units in it. It was not the creating and provisioning of a mighty human race simply as such that was the ultima Thule of his thought, but the developing of the distinctive traits of individual souls, and the establishing with them at the last, after discipline has done its work, intimate and eternal companionship. To think that God ever proposed to stop short of this would be to belittle his plan, to belie the teachings of all sound science and philosophy, leave the grand scheme of evolution incomplete, and judge of God as being coldly self-contained, craving no sympathy, contentedly sitting apart in eternal isolation, wholly unresponsive to the tender pleadings of his children.

When we discover that God has given his personal attention and poured out a wealth of inventive thought on every particle of dust, on every



minutest fibre of every leaflet, on every organ of every infinitesimal creature, we can no longer reasonably withhold our faith in his sympathetic presence with the humblest of his human children. And so science will eventually forever silence the fear of the self-depreciating, who, in their discouragement, are tempted to doubt whether the great God of the universe has ever in the vast multiplicity of his affairs particularly noticed them, much more kept loving and tireless watch over their personal destiny, or ever sought for their confidence and the outpouring of their longing and their love.

But science has not only convinced us that we have no valid reason for questioning God's sympathetic presence, but furnished the strongest possible grounds for resting our full faith upon it, and making it the delight and inspiration of our burdened souls. Those grounds it furnished the moment it published its discovery that every form of vegetive and animal life demanded an environment, that it has no resources in itself for self-maintenance, and that also within its reach it invariably found that on which it was fitted to feed. Plants have required soils and sunlight and distilling dews, and they have found them. Though almost countless the peculiarities of need, no species has appeared for which provision has not been made awaiting its advent. The seaweed found its ocean bed and salted surf; the cactus, its parched sand plain; the lichen, its rock;

edelweiss, its Alpine height; the gills and fins of fish, oceans of water; the wings and lungs of birds, oceans of air. Our eyes have found objects without to be painted on their retina within and artist-sunbeams to paint them; our olfactories, the air loaded with odorous exhalations; our nerves of taste, a wide variety of flavors to select and enjoy; our ears, all nature vocal with a grand concert of song. Not only are our bodies constituted to touch and take in an environment and find one wondrously suited to every need, but the same is true of both our intellectual and emotional capacities. All nature abounds with suggestive thought. It is full of mental stimulant. It is a book in which every grade of intellect finds passages of absorbing interest and deepest import. Its leaves are turned eagerly by prattling children, gray-haired savants, matter-of-fact men of affairs, dream-enamored poets, and system-building philosophers. Its lore is still unexhausted, though the human race for scores of centuries has sought to master it. It has depths of meaning which human insight has not yet fathomed; heights of sublime exaltation to which not even the most spiritually gifted have yet attained. It is full of open letters to every son and daughter of earth with every sentence penned by a Divine hand. Our longings for intellectual and sympathetic interchange with our fellows have been met through literature, and arts and architecture, through family ties and ever widening social cir-

cles. But with this almost infinite painstaking to provide a fitting environment for man, there is a want which in all the fullness of God's works there is absolutely nothing suited to satisfy. Man in his higher nature craves a sympathy which no creature can give. Unless these spiritual aspirations and deep longings, the sure tokens not only of his Divine sonship but of his Divine likeness, can find a Divine environment of companionship, of interchange of thought and affection, all that is God-like within him will languish and die and he sink to brute life or below it. National and individual history, wherever people have self-exiled themselves from the Father, has furnished sad cumulative proofs of this. Is it reasonable to suppose that a plan so wonderful in its elaborate painstaking and masterful achievements, exhibiting such seeming exhaustlessness of inventive resource, would fail just where a failure must prove so disastrous? Is it reasonable to suppose that God would create man with a capacity and a longing for his own sympathetic presence, indeed make that presence necessary to his well-being, and then withhold it; that he would give him spiritual lungs on whose respiration of an atmosphere of Divine loving recognition his spiritual life depended, and then leave him to pant and die in a vacuum? These questions carry with them their own emphatic denial. To proclaim this grand fact of God's sympathetic presence and to embody it in a life was the glory of Christ's mis-

sion to this sin-cursed and sorrow-burdened world. He even sealed it with his blood.

Thus from nature, philosophy, and the revealed word there comes to this life-giving fact a three-fold confirmation.

In our lonely hours, in hours of desperate battling with temptation, of bitter bereavement, of perplexed and care-cumbered thought, at times when our hearts bleed with poignant regret or through unjust accusation, when friends on whom we have leaned or in whom we have confided the sacred secrets of our inner selves have become estranged, through the long days of languishment on sick beds, in moments when with streaming eyes and trembling lips we bid good-by to loved ones, in every hour of need, we are privileged to say, as did the Saviour when the dark clouds gathered about him: "And yet I am not alone, for the Father is with me."

Into God's sympathetic presence the lovingly obedient come, into its welcoming smile, its golden sunlight, its eternal day.

## DOES PRAYER AVAIL?

### IV

I have thus far attempted to show —

1. How God can interfere in nature whenever he chooses without working any confusion, abrogating any law, or destroying any force;
2. That he has thus actually interfered, and that repeatedly;
3. That we are, each one of us, of sufficient importance to warrant his interfering for us.

I now desire to consider whether we can reasonably believe that he will interfere because we ask him, doing for us what otherwise he would not have done.

In following out the different lines of inquiry suggested by this theme, we have found that the whole earth is instinct with the Divine Presence, that whichever way we turn we stand face to face with nature's God, witnessing not only finished works replete with his thought, but works still being carried on by organized and tireless living forces. These forces we have found wrapped in such unfathomable mystery, working right before our very eyes with such unabated vigor, such wondrous precision, such wisdom, such irresistibleness of movement, that we have recognized Divine thought and Divine power in every bit of rock crystal, every pendent leaf, every tint of sky or painted petal, every liquid note of bird, or rest-

less tongue of flame. And it has greatly enhanced our pleasure to find that our own minds are so akin to the Divine that we can trace with clear, interpretive insight the great trend of God's thoughts through the ages as they have become incarnated one by one; for when, from off that illumined face confronting us everywhere, there thus fades that strange faraway look and in its stead comes an answering glance of recognition and kindly greeting, that face apparently draws so near we can all but feel its warm touch upon our cheek, look down into the infinite depths of its love-lit eyes, and see the parting of its lips as they break the long-kept silence with words of benediction.

But it appearing that these forces are derivative and delegated, rather than direct acts of Divine will, we have found that we must take other steps in our thinking before we can reach that assurance for which every human heart hungers, of God's still being present on this earth and still actively interested in it; for otherwise, what grounds have we for believing that these forces were not fully commissioned ages ago, and that since then God has gone far into the stellar depths to people other planets and never once come back again or even given this little globe a passing thought? for otherwise, how do we know but that the earth is nothing more than a finished piece of mechanism, like the watches we carry, and, like them, wound up and kept running by the coiled energy of some

hidden spiral spring? Happily we have discovered that matter and force are of such a nature, and so related, that abundant opportunity has been afforded, and with apparent design, for the effective intervention at any time of direct will-power. A study of our own experiences has suggested this; for, if we by the might of our own wills have wrought such multitudinous changes on the earth, we can readily conceive that the Divine will can work by analogous methods, and be as much more effective as the Divine knowledge transcends the human. It cannot, as we have found, be reasonably urged that this, God's, direct personal interference would be a confession of flaw in his scheme of evolution, as provision for this may have been and doubtless was, a part of that very scheme. He, as we have seen, left many of his works incomplete with the evident design that man's will should complete them; and if provision was thus made for the after use of the guiding force of the human will, why not for that of the Divine? And we are confirmed in this faith when we reflect that, otherwise, God, instead of being an exhaustless fountain of outflowing, energizing thought, instead of being to us the very personification of living force, of tireless mental buoyancy and zest, becomes a picture of changeless, thoughtless, emotionless calm, of absolute mental stagnation; all the vast plans of his whole universe of worlds, having been completed inconceivable ages ago, not only determined upon to their

minutest details, but intrusted for their unfolding to agencies fully commissioned and empowered to carry out those details to the very letter. Since that time, which lies in a past so remote that no finite imagination can conceive it, he must have been lying with folded hands and folded thought and folded feeling, virtually dead in the midst of the abounding life which he himself created. This conception of the Divine existence is repellent to every earnest active soul, and there is nothing in the discoveries of science to compel such a belief. The perfecting of the intellectual and spiritual in man must, of course, be God's highest work here, and command his chief attention. But he has linked the soul indissolubly with matter and cosmic force in this world certainly, and also in the next, if the Bible disclosures be true; for after death our souls, so says the record, will still be clothed upon, though the garments be of an imperishable and glorified texture. So we have no warrant in affirming that God has withdrawn his personal oversight and interference from any, even the lowest of his kingdoms, so long as they are so inseparably intertwined, and exercise over each other an influence so vital and lasting.

The facts of the past as disclosed by science, we have found to confirm us in this faith; the progressive changes from a first formless chaos of dead atoms to whirling sun-clusters and solar systems of organized peopled worlds being but the stately steppings of a creating God, and testi-



lying to a sleepless watch and tireless activity as the ages have one by one rolled by. On this revelation of God's mode of existence in the past we may safely predicate that of to-day and of all coming time. We can feel assured that his hands will never fold in weariness in caring for his own, that his eyes will never close in listless inattention to their fate, that he will never surrender to delegated forces the full conduct of the complex affairs of his universe; but will ever be a commanding and directing power everywhere present to the uttermost bounds of space,—just as the vital forces within the boundaries of these bodies of ours sway the cosmic, only more perfectly; and as our spirits, so mysteriously housed within, order the organs to answer the behests of their all-governing wills.

But having progressed thus far in our attempted solution of this most perplexing problem, we find ourselves confronted by questions far more formidable than any we have yet met. They are questions which are sure to intrude whenever there is any thorough thinking on this theme. They have proved such fruitful sources of doubt in earnestly inquiring minds, that, instead of being, as they too often are, ignored or evaded by the leaders of Christian thought, they should be squarely met and fully answered. I remember stating them once at a prayer-meeting presided over by my pastor, who was also a college professor, and, although they were perfectly germane

to the subject of the evening, and I asked for light and needed it, he simply remarked, "There is some intellectual difficulty in that," and immediately passed to other things, and neither in public nor private discourse did he in the slightest manner ever again allude to them. This reverend teacher in his evasive indifference is, I fear, far from being an exceptional case, for it has never been my fortune to have either heard from the pulpit or seen in print any attempted reply.

Grant, says the doubting Thomas, that it is true and demonstrable, as claimed, that God can interfere, that he has interfered and is still interfering, and interfering every day and hour, in every individual life, watching that life with loving interest and with unremitting care, still what proof is there, in all this, that prayer has in a single instance effected any change in the plans which God had formed before the prayer was uttered? Has any prayer given God any new information as to the needs of any petitioner; or rather, has not God had from the first an infinitely fuller and more accurate knowledge of the entire life-necessities of every soul than the soul itself can ever possibly have, with its imperfect finite faculties and meagre experience? Is it not absurd to imagine that we can in any way instruct Jehovah? Do not our prayers appear to him who knows our real needs but utterances of wildest absurdities? But, further asks the questioner, suppose they do sometimes actually voice our real wants, have not

hidden spiral spring? Happily we have discovered that matter and force are of such a nature, and so related, that abundant opportunity has been afforded, and with apparent design, for the effective intervention at any time of direct will-power. A study of our own experiences has suggested this; for, if we by the might of our own wills have wrought such multitudinous changes on the earth, we can readily conceive that the Divine will can work by analogous methods, and be as much more effective as the Divine knowledge transcends the human. It cannot, as we have found, be reasonably urged that this, God's, direct personal interference would be a confession of flaw in his scheme of evolution, as provision for this may have been and doubtless was, a part of that very scheme. He, as we have seen, left many of his works incomplete with the evident design that man's will should complete them; and if provision was thus made for the after use of the guiding force of the human will, why not for that of the Divine? And we are confirmed in this faith when we reflect that, otherwise, God, instead of being an exhaustless fountain of outflowing, energizing thought, instead of being to us the very personification of living force, of tireless mental buoyancy and zest, becomes a picture of changeless, thoughtless, emotionless calm, of absolute mental stagnation; all the vast plans of his whole universe of worlds, having been completed inconceivable ages ago, not only determined upon to their

minutest details, but intrusted for their unfolding to agencies fully commissioned and empowered to carry out those details to the very letter. Since that time, which lies in a past so remote that no finite imagination can conceive it, he must have been lying with folded hands and folded thought and folded feeling, virtually dead in the midst of the abounding life which he himself created. This conception of the Divine existence is repellent to every earnest active soul, and there is nothing in the discoveries of science to compel such a belief. The perfecting of the intellectual and spiritual in man must, of course, be God's highest work here, and command his chief attention. But he has linked the soul indissolubly with matter and cosmic force in this world certainly, and also in the next, if the Bible disclosures be true; for after death our souls, so says the record, will still be clothed upon, though the garments be of an imperishable and glorified texture. So we have no warrant in affirming that God has withdrawn his personal oversight and interference from any, even the lowest of his kingdoms, so long as they are so inseparably intertwined, and exercise over each other an influence so vital and lasting.

The facts of the past as disclosed by science, we have found to confirm us in this faith; the progressive changes from a first formless chaos of dead atoms to whirling sun-clusters and solar systems of organized peopled worlds being but the stately stepplings of a creating God, and testi-

lying to a sleepless watch and tireless activity as the ages have one by one rolled by. On this revelation of God's mode of existence in the past we may safely predicate that of to-day and of all coming time. We can feel assured that his hands will never fold in weariness in caring for his own, that his eyes will never close in listless inattention to their fate, that he will never surrender to delegated forces the full conduct of the complex affairs of his universe; but will ever be a commanding and directing power everywhere present to the uttermost bounds of space,—just as the vital forces within the boundaries of these bodies of ours sway the cosmic, only more perfectly; and as our spirits, so mysteriously housed within, order the organs to answer the behests of their all-governing wills.

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those wants already been known to God and definitely provided for by him? Has he not been busy for ages fitting up this world for us? Are not those instances of his direct interference which are insisted on as having actually occurred and as still occurring, as much parts of this original plan as the formation of a crystal or the growth of a tree? Has he not thought out to the minutest detail just what to do and how to do it? Are the forces at work in the world, and their combinations, so complex that exigencies are constantly arising which escaped God's foreknowledge or for which he failed to provide? Does science or revelation afford us any warrant for thus limiting God's wisdom, for questioning the perfection of his works? If God thus thought out deliberately and fully his vast plans before he uttered his first creative fiat, and had as his guide a perfect and all-comprehending foreknowledge, think you his will has since become so vacillating that he can be cajoled against his best judgment, or that more kindly feeling can be enkindled within him, by the blind, passionate pleadings of creatures of his own make, and whose lives are yet but in the bud?

The only reply I have ever heard given leaves the difficulties just where it found them. It is this, that the prayers of God's people have been all foreknown to him, and their answers provided for, uncomputed ages before they were uttered; that they entered into God's thought when he

formed his original plan, and were made to constitute an integral part of it. This reply is so plausible and has given such general satisfaction, that it may be regarded as the accepted creed of Christendom.

Suppose this were true, that God has both fore-known all prayers and made ample provision for each as each deserves, would not the difficulties just urged still remain? For if the prayer of a righteous man availeth much, as the Scriptures teach, and if it had influence with God, as Christians believe, what matters it, so far as these objections lie, whether that influence is exerted now or was exerted ages ago? For, according to the supposition, prayer has actually wrought a change in the Divine purpose just the same, only at an earlier date; and it is just as truly an embodiment of the blind longings of a finite being addressed to an infinite God; and the fact of the prayer's availing — which must mean, if it means anything, that it actually effects a change in God's plan at the time its influence is felt — witnesses just as pointedly against the perfection of God's plan, since it existed before the change was wrought, and against the stability of his purpose, whether that change occurs now or took place before the chaotic fire-mist was rolled into suns. But, say you, how, then, can the objection be answered? Only in this one way, — by denying the doubter's major promise, that God's foreknowledge is all-comprehending. The denial of this, I believe,



can be shown to be in perfect consonance both with sound philosophy and the Revealed Word when once that Word is rightly understood. Let us then examine this denial, first, from a philosophical standpoint, from the standpoint of the science of metaphysics.

If God foreknows everything that will ever come to pass, all his own mental states must necessarily be included in that foreknowledge. His eternal past and eternal future must be to him an eternal now. This is axiomatic. A moment's reflection will convince us that otherwise there is not a single present intention or plan but what is exposed to the possibility of modification. If a single thought or emotion is ever going to spring up in God's mind unanticipated, coming in as a complete surprise, God himself must be as ignorant as we concerning what part of his vast plans it will pertain to, or what will be its relative importance, or what the radius or duration of its influence. Indeed, both radius and duration must be absolutely infinite; for, however minute the influence or modification, it must result in others, and those in others still — the circle widening thus without end; for the parts of God's plans are supposed to be intimately interlinked, complementary, so precisely fitted part to part that the effect of each is felt throughout the whole, like the intricate complications of a piece of mechanism. And if one thought or emotion may thus spring into being unanticipated, be absolutely original, why

not ten or ten thousand? Indeed, what limit can be placed on their number or on their modifying power? And so, if we would logically defend a belief in the all-comprehensiveness of God's foreknowledge, we must affirm that not a single new idea can arise in his mind,—not a single new emotion be felt, and that if he is thus limited now he must have been equally so at every moment in all the eternal past, and must be through all the years to come; for if there ever has been, or ever will be, a moment when a new thought can thus come, then during all the time preceding that moment the foreknowledge was incomplete. Where does this lead us? In what sort of an intellectual or emotional condition does this irrefragable logic compel us to assert God to be continually? Unquestionably that of perfect stagnation. No thought-processes can be carried on under such conditions,—no succession of ideas, no change of mental state; but God must have been, and must still be, imprisoned in a hopelessly dead calm.

When then did he form his plans for creation? Under this supposition, there never could have been a time when he began to think about them, nor a period during which he adjusted their different parts, each to each, in that perfection of harmony which so astounds us; for that would involve thought-succession. We are not at liberty under this supposition to affirm even that the entire plan in all its details flashed instantly upon him,—for this would impeach the perfection of

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his foreknowledge up to the instant of such in-flooding of thought, but must content ourselves with asserting that it has existed in his mind from all eternity as one of its constituent elements. If God has had no thought-succession, he can have had no feeling; his emotional state having ever necessarily been that of unbroken placidity,—of absolute apathy, his heart throbbless as stone. He could experience no change of feeling; for that would involve thought-succession. From all the sources of joy or sorrow of which we can conceive, he would be utterly debarred—from pleasurable or painful memories, from hopes and forebodings, from social sympathies, from emotions that accompany changes, contrasts, surprises, from the glow of activity, even from the delights and griefs of contemplation; for they all involve thought-movement. Therefore under this supposition God can have no emotional activity, for he would have no thought-activity for its background. Thoughts must course, must come and go, or the heart lies dead.

Such are the absurdities in which we become hopelessly entangled the moment we attempt to defend the doctrine of God's perfect foreknowledge. And besides, on further reflection, we will discover that it is, after all, utterly impossible, from the very nature of the case, for God to fore-know all his own future. The very fact that he is a sovereign spirit precludes this. It is equally impossible, and for the same reason, for him to

know what our future will be. He has made us, equally with himself, of sovereign will, and placed upon us all the responsibilities of that sovereignty. When he thus created us in his own image, he, by that very act, surrendered a part both of his power and of his foreknowledge. He has left it possible for us, despite all the influences he can bring to bear, to rebel against his throne and persist in that rebellion. He in thus constituting us the arbiters of our destinies, necessarily circumscribed his own power. There was no other course open to him. We must be free, must be sovereign, if we become morally accountable, and ever reach up out of a state of simple innocency to that of Divine virtue. And God when he thus surrendered absolute control, also of necessity limited his foreknowledge, for our own self-study reveals that our perfect freedom of choice is inseparably linked with uncertainty as to what that choice will be. Character can be evolved only out of struggle. Virtues are the names of victories won over temptations; and where temptations environ a sovereign will, there must be risks, a certain degree of uncertainty. It cannot be otherwise. We cannot exercise this sovereignty or know that we have it, unless there are open to us two or more courses from which to choose, and our fidelity to principle or the depth of our self-sacrificing affection cannot be developed or brought to test except by genuine wage of battle. And how can it be certainly known whether this shall issue in

defeat or be made glorious by decisive victory? From the very nature of things, complete foreknowledge is precluded, for we can go in the direction of either the weaker or the stronger motive. But, say you, perhaps we have the power thus to go, but in point of fact we never do, for the motive that controls us proves itself the stronger in that we invariably yield to it. This is too wide a conclusion for the premises. Our yielding does not prove it the stronger intrinsically, but simply relatively, and then only because we make it so through our choosing to direct and hold the current of our thoughts in that direction until the chosen object of contemplation acquires prominence and power. We cannot stop the flow of thought, but can change its direction.

- And even God himself cannot with unerring certainty predict what that change will be, for it is purely an act of sovereignty. If, in fact, we never go in the direction of the weaker motive, how do we know we can? Would not this unbroken regularity prove the presence of inexorable law? The testimony of our inner consciousness that we could do differently, would under such circumstances never come to proof. And yet only where strict regularity prevails, can the necessary data be obtained for perfect foreknowledge? Outside this circle of responsible sovereignty, under the reign of absolutism, of immutable order, within which the physical and
- vital forces and the pure animal instincts work

their wonders, God can of course predict with unerring certainty, and to the minutest detail; for the plan is all his own, and from it there is not the slightest deviation, nor can there be. Courses here are predetermined and as exact as mathematical formulas. God, who fixed the conditions, who founded the laws, must know the issue. But in the region of delegated sovereignty, of absolute freedom of choice, or moral accountability, uncertainty just as necessarily enters in and renders prediction impossible.

Dr. Henry VanDyke in his "Gospel for an Age of Doubt," stated and defended substantially the same position I have here taken. As he is one of the leading lights of Presbyterianism, from which, if anywhere, it would be supposed strong opposition would come, his hearty advocacy is especially noteworthy and reassuring.

His affirmation is briefly this: The Divine omnipotence which Christ taught is not sheer, absolute, unconditioned. He taught that God chose to limit the autocratic exercise of his sovereignty by creating beings who have the power of yielding to his will or of resisting it, for otherwise he would be forever shut out from all personal relations, they being possible only where there are different independent wills. It must be admitted frankly that this view of Divine sovereignty does not seem to be consistent with the theory of absolute divine foreknowledge of all volitions and all events. If an event is certain,



fixed and foreordained then God knows it as such; if contingent on free, self-determining, preferential action of a human will then he knows it only as thus contingent.

If what I have argued be true, we need no longer struggle with those hopeless tasks of harmonizing foreordination with free will, and of explaining how a beneficent God could bring into being souls which he at that very time positively knew would be eternally lost.

The doctrine of God's perfect foreknowledge is not only unphilosophical, but also unscriptural. The Bible exhorts us to the deepest earnestness in prayer,—to downright importunity,—and encourages us to believe that the fervent prayer of the righteous man availeth much. No petitioner can plead with any genuine unction unless he believes that he can actually effect some change in the purposes existing in the Divine Mind at the time his prayer is offered. If he were convinced that everything had been prearranged from all eternity; that his tears, and sighs, and passionate words of longing had been present in God's mind always; that they never had exerted, and never could exert, any influence, effect any change, as there could never be a time when they would first arrest God's attention,—how could he wrestle, agonize, in prayer? It would seem but empty show to him, that he was merely playing a part. Every word he uttered would fall back dead. If he believes in God's foreknowledge, he must, while

he prays, if he prays as the Bible commands, utterly forget his belief and fall into the temporary delusion that the matter is yet undetermined, that God's heart is tender, can be moved, that his purposes can be changed. He must forget his belief, must go ahead just as if foreknowledge were not true. Think you God would force his children to such straits, to such mental stultification? The thought is repellent. Read if you will the ninth chapter of Deuteronomy. Moses here rehearses the several rebellions of Israel, and his three separate pleadings before the Lord, of forty days and forty nights each, without either eating bread or drinking water. Each time he fell down before a very angry God who had fully purposed and had definitely announced his purpose to destroy the rebels, and each time, if Moses can be credited, he actually changed that purpose right then and there and rescued his people. The God here depicted had none of that foreknowledge which theologians with such strange unanimity ascribed to him. But, say you, that and similar accounts scattered throughout the Bible are simply instances of anthropomorphism, or rhetorical accommodation, of describing in the language of human experiences and human limitations what really transcends the human; that it was not the intent to have these narrations interpreted as literal history, but as poetic approximations or dim shadowings of really ineffable truths. It seems to me that it would be a

strange way to bring the truth within our comprehension, to state what is directly opposed to the truth, and to reiterate the downright falsehood, again and again, in a most misleading way, and in a matter of such vital moment that all possibility of religious life depends on it, and through which alone any lasting comfort comes to the hungry human soul. Could Moses have thought that what he was so importunately pleading for had actually been determined upon millions of ages before, and that the picture of his prostrate form, his streaming eyes, his starving body, his passion-swayed soul, had been lying in the divine mind from all eternity? He unquestionably believed directly the opposite, and the narration was designed to teach us that directly the opposite was true.

Think you that Christ during that long night of agony in Gethsemane, when he cried out over and over again, while great drops of blood stood on his brow, "If it be possible, let this cup pass from me," knew all the time that there was but one way in which the human race could be rescued, that precisely this one had been predetermined to its minutest detail, and that all that was left for him was to carry it out to the bitter end? Were not those the agonized utterings of a faithful yet shrinking human soul,—for Christ was human as well as divine,—poured out before a supposed loving and sympathetic Father? And have we not a right to believe that they not only deepened

God's sympathy, but actually influenced him to again reconsider the whole subject, that haply he might discover some escape for his Son from the impending doom? When Christ prayed, he unquestionably meant the same as if he had directly said, "Father, do think it over again, and see if it be possible, and if it is, let the cup pass," for the petition is pointless unless this thought is embodied in it. Christ had not yet for an instant harbored the thought of relinquishing the enterprise or even imperiling it by any attempt at self-rescue. He did not even ask for sustaining grace. All he pleaded for was another more searching inquiry to see if some different means of rescue could not be devised. He simply desired to avoid needless humiliation and pain. In what a pitiable farce he must have consented to become an actor during the watches of that memorable night, if he positively knew all the time that there was no other way possible! And if he did not thus know, but God did,—and that too from all eternity, even to the precise mode and to its every detail,—and had unalterably determined upon its being carried out to the very letter, with what cold, relentless cruelty this Father must have listened, hour after hour, to that sorrow-stricken Son as he plead in heart-rending agony for him to see if there were not some other equally effective way to save the lost! How could he listen to that pleading, wailed out on the night air, for something he had not the faintest idea of granting?

Why did he not encircle him in the arms of his everlasting love and at once explain the impossibility of change, if he certainly knew that no change was possible? What importunate pleading! No parallel can be found in all human history. Was it for naught? Was it a stupendous blunder born of ignorance? We cannot mistake it for some blind outcry of a sinking soul. Should we not seek for some sane, sensible purpose in the plea? We have here revealed not simply one of the disciplinary seasons in Christ's career, his desperate battling with the tempter, for he had betrayed no weakness, no unwillingness to face, if need be, any fate however terrible. He showed from first to last a spirit of perfect submission, for note how carefully he coupled with his passionate prayer, "Not as I will, but as thou wilt." Nothing could be added to his consecration. His self-surrender stood complete. His soul was white as the light that beats on God's throne. But how natural, and necessary, and full of deep significance, appears this whole scene in this, earth's darkest tragedy, the moment that we conceive that Christ, instead of being crazed by his grief, was quickened by it to clearer spiritual insight; that in his cry, "O my Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from *me*," the real plea was that the whole subject-matter of modes of rescue should be reopened and again most searchingly reviewed; that God fully answered that prayer by a long, deep study; and that, when the last faint ray of

hope went out in night, he in accents tender as an infinite pity could make them, told Christ all; and then that the Saviour, satisfied, rose from his knees, wiped away the blood-stains of his agony, and with a calm, majestic bearing—that never again left him, save in the last throes of dissolution,—said to his disciples, “Rise up, let us go; lo! he that betrayeth me is at hand.”

Had I time, and were it necessary, I might multiply indefinitely citations from Scripture of cases in which it is clearly taught that even to God’s eye the future is not wholly uncurtained,—that he carries on processes of thought as we do, elaborates plans, modifies them and sometimes even abandons them altogether to meet the demands of unforeseen exigencies as they arise, that he interferes in behalf of his children and because they ask him, actually forming and executing entirely new, unpremeditated purposes in response to their asking.

Against this view, that we actually exert an influence over the Divine mind, it has been urged, as I have already remarked, that it implies imperfection in the Divine adjustments, and vacillation in the Divine will, that it is the very height of presumption in us to suppose that we can influence the great God of the universe to do differently from what he had in his wisdom deliberately planned. The usual reply, that God has from the first foreknown all prayers and carefully incorporated his answers into his original designs,

is, as I have endeavored to point out, fatally lacking both in sound philosophy and in Scripture support. How, then, can the objection be met? In the first place, God has, as I have explained, left his works in such plastic state that he can whenever he chooses interfere by direct will-power without occasioning any disorder. If so, what can be urged against the belief that he left them thus with the express design of introducing from time to time such modifications as circumstances should require? Indeed, what other explanation can be given than this for the presence of this universal characteristic? This, instead of betraying a weakness, a flaw, in God's plans, reveals its strength and finish. So far as it was possible for him to perfectly foreknow, so far the conditions of change and activity have been unalterably fixed, as in the operation of chemic, vital, and instinct forces. But realizing that in delegating to his human offspring the responsible power of free choice he would necessarily let in the element of uncertainty, thus obscuring his prophetic vision, he with most profound wisdom contrived through this very plasticity in nature to be able to meet any emergency that might arise, to leave every avenue free, every particle of matter and every form of force promptly responsive to his call. His plans in such a case, instead of being ill advised and marred with faults, are simply unperfected and in constant process of completion. He is thus afforded ample opportunity to

enjoy unceasing mental activity and with sleepless eye and tireless hand to be ever caring for his own. To me this conception of God is by far the most exalted and stimulating. Instead of an idle spectator walled out of his own universe, he becomes an intense participant of effective personal presence, a living, loving spirit, free and masterful, the embodiment of all the active virtues and throbbing sympathies that are the necessary heroic belongings of him who would win the affectionate reverence of human hearts.

In consonance with this view we shall find that actual and adequate provision has been made, and that methods have been devised in the very constitution of things for the answering of prayer. They are to be found in part in the well nigh miraculous capacities of this self-same sub-conscious mind to which we have alluded, and in that law of suggestion under which its invaluable services are placed at our disposal. In the nature of this provision it will also be seen that it is God's purpose not to directly interfere except in emergencies where means already provided and placed in human reach prove inadequate to accomplish the desired ends.

To make our requests known to God in the right spirit, that is, with the understanding that we will actively and at once set about using whatever resources we now have, or may acquire, and with the understanding that we purpose to ask only for what we intently long for and are willing to



make every proper personal sacrifice to secure, to purge ourselves from all selfishness, to place such implicit trust in God's loving care that no worryment will enter in, to open our minds unreservedly to the inflowing of his helpful sympathy; all this is to secure the most favorable conditions, and to invite ultimate success.

Prayers for blessings which are now or may be within our own reach have already been answered. It would be idle to pray to be placed in Liverpool so long as an ocean steamer is at the wharf ready to take us there. God will not furnish again what he has amply provided. When we come into that state of submission where we can say from our hearts, "not my will but thine," we have not necessarily tied our own hands, but we have, indeed, liberated God's by making it possible as never before to carry out his plans of loving help without injury to us; on the other hand while we harbor a spirit of insistence on having our own way, to grant our request would be to encourage us in that spirit and to intensify it, to weaken our trust in him and make ourselves self-sufficient. This spirit of submission does not necessarily preclude having and expressing preference and longing. We not yet knowing God's mind in the matter, it does not prevent us from trying to co-operate with him in securing our desires, it simply places us in an attitude of loving trust, of patient waiting, of assurance that the best will prevail; meantime it takes one very serious ob-

struction out of God's path to the granting of our request. We can help God as well as he can help us.

Until we are convinced to the contrary we have a right to believe that what we unselfishly desire is what God wants us to have and what he will surely help us to get, how and when we must leave to his infinite wisdom and love to determine. His plans for answering may in some instances reach over into the other life, but their accomplishment is certain and will not unnecessarily be delayed.

He needs our co-operation, desires us to use all known and rightful aids and remedies, and when necessary stands ready to supplement our efforts. There is an attitude of resignation that is false, fatalistic, utterly unfilial, not only not enjoined but positively forbidden. This is characteristic of Mohammedanism and Buddhism, and of all Oriental philosophy. There is a belief in Divine imminence widely prevailing at the present day in our own churches, maintaining that God as "an Infinite Spirit fills all the universe with himself alone, so that all is from him and in him and there is nothing that is outside," that all the inorganic and the organic forces are the direct energizings of his personal will, all life infused and suffused with his will, the whole universe his living garment; a belief that is alike destructive of the true spirit of prayer, for unless we can believe in God as transcendent, as apart from his creation, and in delegated, secondary causes, carrying out a

general plan which is open to modifications to suit unforeseen emergencies, we can not ask God to interfere either directly or indirectly for then we should be simply asking him to interfere with himself.

Sir Oliver Lodge says, "Science cultivates a vigorous, adult, intelligent, serpent-like wisdom and active interference with the course of nature; religion fosters a meek, receptive, child-hearted attitude of dove-like resignation to Divine Will." This may be true of some religionists, but not of true religion.

If you will examine recent works on psychology you will find that this very frame of mind which I have described as the one in which we should pray is the one out of which the most effective suggestions will come to the sub-conscious mind, as it embodies faith, trust, complete concentration and absorption of the attention, deep, unselfish love, cheerful expectancy, whole souled co-operation, true submission, exclusion of fear and all forms of disturbing and unworthy thoughts.

In this way you enlist not only the curative and kindly helping forces already organized and operative, but also when necessary the direct benign will power of God himself who ever keeps over his own his loving watch and care.

How these suggestions arouse all the latent activities of this sub-conscious self, of whose "submerged mentation we catch only indirect refracted glimpses," and how its marvels are wrought are

mysteries which so far we have made very little headway in fathoming. The conscious personality is never more than a small fraction of the psychical personality.

Part emerges into consciousness, the most marvelous part, "the underground workshop of thought," as Dr. Holmes characterizes it, remains concealed. We do know, however, that it is one of the most potent agencies ever at work in the world, and by experience we have found the secret charm, *suggestion*, that will unfetter its forces. We have also found out some of its limitations, for it is only one out of many of God's instrumentalities, and so the more conservative and sane-minded of Christian psychotherapists confine their attention solely to functional nervous complaints in which the mind and moral nature are controlling factors, and these are indeed a great company making up, according to the estimate of an eminent neurologist, seventy-five per cent. of the disorders of the American people, including as they do neurasthenia, hysteria in its protean forms of simulated organic lesions, hypochondria and morbid worries; while excluding diseases caused by micro-organisms, like malaria, pneumonia, diphtheria, yellow fever, cancer and smallpox, also cases requiring surgical operation, and those in which the tissues have been actually destroyed.

Out from the shadowy manifestations of the sub-liminal self come "genius, premonition, inspiration, prevision, telepathy, clairvoyance, the hyp-

notic trance and allied states at present beyond the pale of science, but inside the universe of fact."

No attitude of the soul is so certain of securing the co-operation of these mighty spiritual forces as that of devout prayer and through them we are brought into access to all other helpful instrumentalities of God's providing, besides coming into the most intimate spiritual relationship with God himself. Through telepathy, the spirit's wireless telegraph, to cite but a single one, our personality can reach out, in control, to those, however far away, who can render us service or it may be are disposed to do us harm.

An instance once came to my personal knowledge illustrating this. A man at one time had it in his power and in his purpose to do another a great business injury. This second man heard of it in some way. That night he agonized in prayer until near daybreak, that God would avert the impending calamity. At last there came to him profound peace and he fell asleep. The next day he heard through a mutual acquaintance the confession of the first man, that his mind had come into such a distressing tumult over the matter that he had to abandon the project before he could get any comfort or peace. Of course I cannot say with certainty that the agitation and final change of purpose was wrought by telepathy, God employing this indirect method of answering prayer, but I can say that this is a very probable, a very natural, explanation, and serves to

show the avenues left open here and there by the Heavenly Father, through which he may extend to his pleading children his personal care.

Auto-hypnotism, to cite another of these indirect means, has no doubt saved many martyrs from the horrors of their fate. They have been lifted into that state of ecstasy in which pain and fear are impossible, while burning at the stake or while being torn in pieces by the ravenous beasts of the amphitheatre.

There are no doubt laws of prayer amid the mysteries of the universe. So prevalent an instinct must be founded on the constitution of the world. Prayer will be found to be a positive power, the prayer attitude being a definite psychic state having natural psychic consequents opening the inner consciousness, enlarging the soul's receptivity to spiritual forces and, because of the close union of body and soul, acting on all the nerve centres, restoring tone and rhythm.

Man's will, we now know, can co-operate with God's, effecting results which would not be secured were not both wills conjoined. In prayer we are brought into close sympathetic relations with the Heavenly Father. We unburden our souls to him, confide all our secret sorrows and aspirations and longings, for we feel that he understands them, and can be trusted. This very unburdening brings relief. We no longer feel lonely and friendless. The soul thus freed is in the best mood possible to convey auto-suggestions to the

sub-conscious self and that self best prepared to take them in. We are thus brought into telepathic touch with the Infinite, and are brought into tune with those among our fellows who can render aid. What more powerful stimulant to health of body and soul? What more powerful persuasive over others or incentive to ourselves?

Modern psychotherapy, the healing power of the spirit, has been crudely foreshadowed all down the centuries. It is ingrained in the very fibre of all human history, although this psychic element with its myriad activities thus dimly divined by philosophers and religionists in the long ago, is just beginning to be explored in downright earnest by the scientists of to-day. Christ demonstrated it in many of the cures he wrought. He taught it to his disciples and they successfully practiced it in their day. It, however, gradually fell into disuse as society grew more complex. The Church through neglect largely lost its power. It is now again coming to its own. The New Thought is but a restatement of the old. The new movement, in its saner aspects is an earnest attempt to recover those principles and powers of the Church which should never have fallen into disuse. Doctor Horace Bushnell boldly challenged in his day the Christian Church to show warrant for abdicating its healing function.

Professor William James, of Harvard, says, "It is quite obvious that a wave of religious activity analogous in some respects to the spread of

early Christianity is passing over our American Continent. Materialistic philosophy is being superseded by a new idealism — the supremacy of the spirit, the sub-conscious self, connection of mind to mind, are now commanding attention —” We may go still farther and say that a great spiritual awakening is sweeping over the world, an enlarged realization of its hitherto neglected spiritual resources, and a wider understanding of how to transform them into servitors and saviors of mankind.

Why is it, we naturally ask, that God has suffered the world to wait so long before coming into this, its rich spiritual inheritance? Why so long conceal this priceless treasure, if there is one, giving only a hint of it here and there? We might with equal reason ask why he buried the coal beds and rock quarries and mines of metal, why he hid the utilities of steam and electric forces, why secretly provided the possibilities of anesthetics, and vaccines, and anti-toxins and poison antidotes in the chemistries of the earth, why he left his vegetable and lower animal creations in a wild, crude state requiring subjugation before utilization, why he so planned that only after vast toil and exhausting study, the evolving of deep inventive thought, railroads and steamships and printing presses and wireless telegraphs and hospital equipments have become features of modern life.

We can simply answer that growth through



struggle is the only possible law under which moral character can be evolved. The very exigencies of the case demanded this patient waiting for development. This scheme, of which in the physical world we see but a part, was the only possible one whereby the soul of man could at last be transformed into the image of God, that "one divine event to which the whole creation moves."

Hints of the presence of electrical energy have been given out everywhere all along down the ages, but not until the last seventy-five years has the most advanced of the human races taken advantage of these hints.

Since investigations have been begun in downright earnest, progress has been rapid and achievements phenomenal.

So not until very recent years has the true nature of prayer, the possibilities of its accomplishment and the secret sources of its power been rightly understood, and in consequence it fell into sad neglect.

Certain cold formalities, called prayers, which have never been expected to be answered, have been abundant, but real prayers that well up out of a deep soul-hunger, embodying an unselfish love and inspired by a reverent faith that moves the arm that moves the world, how few, very few.

Let us hope then that the day of the world's deliverance is at hand, that the materialistic nineteenth century is destined to be superseded by a century marked by a new idealism, that the works

and powers of the spirit are to be the theme of thought, that the long lost power of the Church, Christ's legacy, is again to be restored.

Let us dismiss all lingering doubt of our being of sufficient worth for God to hear when we call, or that he has not made ample provision in order to interfere in our behalf either directly or indirectly, and to interfere because we ask him.

God being able to forecast the general trend, the ordinary tendencies, of the lives of his children, has unquestionably prearranged his providences to meet their probable wants, has provided for them a bountiful environment full of illimitable possibilities of joy and growth. For the extraordinary and unforeseen he has made, as I have shown, provision for leaving himself ample facilities for immediate interference. And then, too, by timely suggestions he may, and often does, make us willing and intelligent servitors of his will, inaugurating by a single whispered thought, in moments of crisis, movements of deep and lasting import in our own or others' destiny.

Thoroughly conversant, as he must be, with all the peculiar mental states of every individual as fast as they arise, his seed-thoughts fall opportunely into responsive soils and soon quicken into harvests. A word dropped into the mind of a young Luther starts a reformation that shakes to its very center the papal throne of the world. As Carlyle says, "The clock strikes when there is a change from hour to hour, but there is no ham-

mer in the horologue of time to peal through the universe when there is a change from era to era." God notes those pivotal periods and uses them.

Any human will obstinately standing in the way of the great ongoings of his providence, as it certainly can as long as it is free, he reserves the power of either temporarily or permanently placing under duress. Of course, while thus borne down by a superior personality, while deprived of its freedom of choice, it is relieved of responsibility, its acts lose their moral quality, and it becomes like any other force in nature. It is, however, responsible for necessitating such summary procedure. This divine impressment, this infringement upon our freedom, may, for aught we know, be frequently resorted to in the course of individual or national history. We certainly are the arbiters of our destinies. But woe betide him who recklessly dashes against the thick bosses of Jehovah's buckler. We are closely hedged in by carefully constructed systems of inexorable law. We can break those laws if we choose, but we do it at our peril. We can stand out persistently against all God's good influences; we may render futile his utmost efforts to rescue us from the thralldom of sin. The whole race may combine successfully to thwart his purposes of love. From the very nature of the case he was forced to incur that risk, for virtue can live only in an atmosphere of liberty. But we must remember God's unalterable determination from the beginning has been not to make everybody

loyal and loving, but simply to furnish the possibilities of loyalty and love, and then do all in his power consistent with the conditions precedent — to character-forming to develop within each soul the germs of divinity of his own hand's planting. He may be forced to summon a deluge, or an earthquake, or some wasting pestilence to do his terrible bidding; he may be forced to abandon what after trial prove ineffectual methods, and adopt new ones; he may be forced to recall the gift of liberty, or the very gift of the present form of existence here and hereafter from those who persistently repel all proffers and become hopelessly hardened; but his loving purpose still holds out, his laws still stand, the golden opportunities are still presented, each century witnesses some new conquests of love, some souls added to heaven's company, the great scheme is steadily going forward to its finally glorious though as yet far distant consummation.

Such a view of God — of his maturing and executing plans, of his intellectual and emotional life — as I have endeavored to present, is the only one, after all, actually conceivable by finite minds. To pronounce him unconditioned, unchangeable, omniscient, omnipotent, omni-present, using these words in their ordinary and fullest acceptation, placing no restriction upon their meaning, is simply falling, unintentionally, no doubt, into nothing less than word-jugglery, affirming what to human minds must of necessity be absolutely unthinkable.

— The only rational course is to take for our basic thought that we have been created in God's image, and then to picture God as a spirit possessing in perfection attributes analogous to our own, although these are yet germinal and sin-distorted.

I am now ready to answer the question, How can we reasonably hope by our petitions to effect a change in the Divine purposes, and why should we plead importunately, why kindle our souls into such intensity of fervor? The Scriptures, in enjoining earnestness, need not be understood as favoring attempts to coax and tease God, as we too frequently do our earthly parents, to act against his better judgment out of some weak, short-sighted sympathy. If that be our purpose, we may be certain of flat failure. Our prayers will never induce him to deal any more generously with us. He has always stood with outstretched arms, with overflowing sympathy, waiting impatiently to bless us. What untold wealth of deep inventive thought, what untold eons of slowly passing years he has already lavished in his preparations for our coming, for our maintenance, for our unfolding, for our permanent weal! While our prayers will not make him any more kindly disposed, will not noticeably increase his sympathy for us, they will in most marked measure increase his sympathy with us, will profoundly change our attitude toward him and multiply our capacity for blessing ten thousand-fold. Indeed, so radical is the change wrought, that what would have been poison before, becomes

medicine now. We thus furnish God new facts upon which to act, facts of mental attitude, the unforeseen outputs of our sovereignty. That attitude is one of Christ-like love, manifesting itself in five forms — that of willing obedience, of self-sacrificing service, of sense of Divine dependence, of restful confidence, and of intensest longing. Until that attitude is attained in all these prime essentials, as I have already explained, God, if he should interfere by stepping outside his general providence, in which the evil and the good are served alike, to confer especial favors, would be doing violence to his conceptions of fitness and of true beneficence, would work his children a most positive injury, placing a premium on qualities that stand over against these forms of love, thereby countenancing a spirit of rebellion, selfishness, self-sufficiency, distrust and ignoble apathy. It is the fervent prayer of the righteous man that availeth much. He must be righteous and his righteousness must be on fire to fulfill the Scripture conditions. That availing power is something more than retroactive; it moves the arm that moves the world. As this is a moral state of the soul within the circle of its sovereignty, the product of its absolutely free choice, there cannot be, as I have shown, any sure prophecy of its coming. But when it comes, all barriers are burnt away. Reserve gives place to closest sympathetic intimacy. What more natural when the spirits of father and son thus meet and mingle, than that the son, care-

cumbered it may be, or broken with grief, or baffled in purpose, though battling still, should pour out in most impassioned utterance his deep and noble longings? Love itself would so prompt; for love casteth out fear, is the very essence of liberty. Cautious reserve cannot live in its atmosphere of holy confidence. All curtains of concealment fall instantly at the magic touch of sympathy. He could not keep his longings back. His father's tender look and tone would break the seals of silence, would touch his lips with coals of fire. The thought of trying by coaxing to melt down his stern reluctance is utterly foreign to such a scene, repugnant to such a state, and was never contemplated in the Gospel. What more natural than that God's heart should be deeply stirred by the fervid outflow of such a passion of love and longing, and that he should by direct will-power supply the deficiencies of his general providence, or by timely suggestion reveal its resources, and place them in reach to meet the needs of such a soul in such an hour?

These views are not only thus in deep accord with the principles of sound philosophy and the revelations of modern science, but also with the profoundest intuitions of human hearts; for when once our sense of world-dependence and of self-sufficiency is rudely swept away by some disaster, and we come intently to long for what we find we cannot reach without God's help, how soon we brush aside all hindering creeds, and in dead

earnest plead our case, and plead believing that the heart and arm of God will answer to our plea! But in this intensely materialistic and scientific age there have so insidiously settled about our thought the bewildering fogs of learned and subtile sophistries breathed out by those who would either relegate God altogether from his universe or make his relations quite inconsequential and remote, that only in the stress of crises in our history do our long-neglected religious intuitions assume their rightful sovereignty, and restore us to our true relations with him who in his great love never wearies in caring for his own. But may we not hope that the night is well-nigh spent, that the fogs are lifting, that a new day dawns — a day of deeper, clearer, truer thought, of more perfect knowledge, of more enlightened faith, and a faith whose kindly light will prove the sure harbinger of God's perfect day?



## DOES PRAYER AVAIL?

### V

I have thus far endeavored to show —

1. How God may interfere whenever he chooses;
2. That there are incontestable evidences, and multitudes of them along down the centuries, that he has thus actually interfered;
3. That we are warranted in believing that we, each one of us, the humblest and most obscure, are of sufficient consequence to attract his attention and secure this his direct interference; and
4. That he will interfere because we ask him, doing for us what otherwise he would not have done.

There is left for me now but one other general affirmation to make. With its explanation and proof I believe I shall have presented the subject in all its essential phases. It is this: Every reasonable prayer offered in a right spirit is certain of favorable answer. This is the clear import of Christ's comprehensive promise to his disciples, as recorded in Matthew, "All things whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive," or, as Mark states it, "Whatsoever things ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." If we interpret these passages in the light of the context and of the general trend of Christ's teachings, we cannot but conclude that Christ premised in his promise that the

prayers should be reasonable and that they should be offered in the right spirit. No petitioner who complies with these two conditions need ever fear failure.

To have our prayers reasonable, we should, in the first place, guard against asking for anything which we can procure by our own exertions, making use of the resources of physical and mental strength, of social ties and general surroundings already in reach. God is a strict economist. If he has already made ample provisions in his general providence, and if we ourselves can by proper industry discover and utilize this provision, we ought not to expect from him any further help by special act. We must exhaust our own means first, and ask him simply to supplement our weakness and insufficiency. Otherwise we should be asking not only for what God has really already bestowed — and bestowed in a way which he thought would do us the greatest and most lasting good — but for what, if granted again in this more direct manner, would prove to us a positive bane, and not a blessing; and if such a course were continued, all incentive to industry and enterprise would thus be taken away, physical and mental sloth would succeed to healthful, growth-promoting activity, abject timidity and feeling of dependence would take the place of a manly spirit of self-reliance. No wise parent among us, however keen and quick his sympathies, would ever consent thus to shield his child from toil and care and battle-test, for he

knows he would by dandling him thus in the lap of ease and luxury be sure to unman him, weaken his body and invite disease, dull the edge of his faculties and rob him of every prospect of progress, of every trace of nobility, of everything that gives zest and incentive and joy to life and gilds the future with its pencilings of glory. Wise teachers refrain from helping their pupils so long as they can help themselves. Their office is not to relieve but to incite, not to dwarf but draw out, not to convert those under their charge into cowering weaklings but into athletes and conquerors. Even the eagle, prompted by a Divine wisdom, will push her timid fledgelings out from their lofty eyrie-home, and watch them flutter, and hear their cry of distress as they disappear down the sides of the gorges; keeping herself, however, meantime, in ready reach, and now and then darting under to save them from fatal fall, for God has taught this mother thus to throw her children on their own resources, that they may feel their wings and learn to use them. This is a rude awakening. It seems a cruel banishment. But otherwise they would never learn to poise and wheel in air, to dart like thunderbolts, to breast the hurricane, or to climb the steep stairways of the sky.

God loves us too well to heed any of our cries except in times of positive and pressing need. He will let us struggle alone until our strength and judgment fail. He will, however, always keep in call, and will, in deepest sympathy, watch the con-

test point by point, and we can rest assured that in the hour of our extremity, should such hour come, we shall be made gladly conscious of some answering heartbeat, shall hear some whispered word, shall feel the uplifting power of some helping hand of love. A prayer for God to convert our impenitent friends would be unreasonable if without conditions or provisos, as it might be utterly impossible for him to secure such a result. All we can sensibly ask for is that he will make use of all the instrumentalities at his command, arrest the attention, rouse the conscience, reveal the danger of delay, the consequences of continued rebellion as well as of loving obedience — in a word, bring to bear all the persuasive influences possible and still leave their wills untrammelled, for without absolute freedom of choice being constantly maintained, no moral change can possibly be wrought.

Again, our prayers to be reasonable must be consistent in all their parts, must be free from contradictory requests. To answer prayers in their entirety would sometimes be impossible even to God. To illustrate: It would be inconsistent for us to ask only for the agreeable things of this life — for freedom from care, sorrow, and pain — from disappointment, privation, calumny — from all the vexations, perplexities and disasters of life — and at the same time that he would develop in us that glorious Christ-likeness for which, in our nobler inspired moments, we so intently long; as well ask for the knit sinews of an athlete, while nestling in

undisturbed repose in the padded sleepy hollows of a rocking-chair. The ignoble fate of a soul set free from life's carking care and environed with all that the most cultured civilization could suggest, Tennyson, in his "Palace of Art," has pictured with a master hand. If we would be like Christ, we must pass through Christ's school of experience. He needed the discipline of suffering and struggle, as well as we. He began where we begin — in perfect innocency yet characterless, possessing simply the possibilities of virtue totally undeveloped. It is because he afterward became a hero, battle-taught, battle-tested, battle-scarred, and yet never knew defeat; it is because he through faith wrought righteousness, out of weakness was made strong, endured the cross, despising the shame, suffered long and was kind, sought not his own, was not easily provoked, thought no evil, rejoiced not in iniquity but rejoiced in the truth, bore all things, believed all things, endured all things, loved us with a love that never failed and loved us to the end,—it is because of this, Christ has stood before the ages, and will stand, as the Peerless One, the Revelator of the Divine Heart, the Liberator and Saviour of mankind, the Prince of Peace. We must bear Christ's cross, would we wear his crown.

Then answered the Lord to the cry of his world  
Shall I take away pain  
And with it the power of the soul to endure  
Made strong by the strain?

Shall I take away pity that knits heart to heart

And sacrifice high?

Will ye lose all your heroes that lift from the fire

White brows to the sky?

Shall I take away love that redeems with a price

And smiles at the loss?

Can ye spare from your lives that would climb into  
mine

The Christ on his cross?

We fall into these contradictions in our prayers, through a total misconception of the design of this life. Evolution, not unalloyed present pleasure, is the purpose now. We have been housed in perishable bodies full of quivering nerves; have been environed with antagonistic forces that threaten and thwart us at every turn; our paths have been left rough and full of dangerous pitfalls; poisons pervade much of the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we take to repair these weak clay tenements. To millions, life is a heavy care-burden, a fierce contest, and how frequently is it one long catastrophe made up of broken hopes and baffled purposes, of weariness and scalding tears and sighs for rest! Why is it? Is this life a stupendous failure? If there is no beyond for which it is preparing, it most certainly is. If there is no beyond in which other and fully sufficient opportunities will be afforded for reformation and restoration and ultimately glorious development as God first planned, then for these untold millions who have been afforded

scant means and scant capacities in this initial being through some as yet unexplained though doubtless in their case unavoidable necessities, God's scheme of life is surely a stupendous failure. But, as we most sincerely believe, he has not finished with them yet. Tennyson's query and reply in his "In Memoriam" we may well make our own.

"What hope of answer and redress?  
Behind the veil, behind the veil."

Could not God have shielded his children from suffering and struggle? Yes: but not without hopelessly excluding them from all prospect of spiritual progress, leaving them forever on the low plane of ignoble, irresponsible brute life. The error is widely prevalent, that God has by some arbitrary decision established the great underlying principles that determine moral character, and can at will change the conditions of spiritual growth. No more mischievous confusion of thought can possibly be entertained. These principles and conditions must reach back indefinitely, can of necessity have had no beginning, and cannot be susceptible of the slightest change; for otherwise before their establishment God could not have been possessed of any moral attribute, or have had for his own governance any standard of moral life. He cannot change them or set them aside; for a moment's reflection will disclose that not even he can convert selfishness into a virtue, or place heart-

less cruelty on a par with a spirit of self-forgetting love.

What he has done for us in this regard is to give power of free choice, and capacity for moral discernment, and to place us in moral relations with himself and with our fellows, and to establish us amid such surroundings as are fitted by their disciplinary processes to develop into glorious fact what are at the first but bare possibilities of virtue. We may, if we choose, stand true to these eternal principles of obligation, live in loving harmony with these many-sided relationships of life, and thereby grow into Divine likeness, or we may persistently refuse to conform, and shut against our souls forever this only open door to hope, miss forever this only opportunity to win eternal life. Simply these possibilities are or can be of Divine gift. Virtues God cannot bestow: they must be born of battle. Dark as were Christ's forebodings of the coming afflictions of his disciples, deeply as he longed to save them from the imprisonments and scourgings and cruel deaths which awaited them, he, in that last prayer so memorable for its deep, pathetic tenderness, prayed not that his Father would take them out of the world and save them from its sufferings and from its spiritual exposures, but only that he would keep them from the evil, from being finally overmastered and borne down by the terrible power of the tempter. God could not save even his Son, his best beloved. He could by his crea-



—tive word speak a universe into being, but he could not set aside or render less exacting a single one of the laws of spiritual unfolding, even for Christ himself, though through those long night watches in Gethsemane his shrinking human soul plead for relief with an agony so intense as to cause his body to sweat great drops of blood. Christ, with his human limitations of knowledge, seemed to hope that God might in some way avert the impending doom and still accomplish the objects of his mission, and so he prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." Yet while God could not save him from that hour, he no doubt whispered words of comfort, gave assurances of his deep-felt sympathy, promised his loving presence and sustaining grace through it all, and, once his mission ended, a glad and honored welcome to the skies.

What God did for Christ and for his disciples he will do for us, and for this we may most confidently pray, that he will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear, but will with the temptation provide some way of escape, some way to glorious and final victory. His purpose is to supplement, not supplant. He will send angels to minister, will grant moments of respite, and glimpses of glory.

Let us not mistake God's plan and our privilege, and supinely fold our hands thinking that all the care-burdens, and griefs and racking pains of this life are divinely sent and to be meekly

borne, but rather remember that while this world is full of dangers and disasters it is also full of curative forces, while our bodies are subject to disease all their tissues tend towards health. In this we find our divine warrant to relieve the stress whenever and wherever we can. In searching out and applying the remedies and in bravely bearing the burdens when remedies finally fail we may convert them into disciplinary blessings, into uplifts in the spiritual life. We ought not to regard all ills as specially sent but simply as results of a widely comprehensive plan, the output of general delegated forces, that many of them are preventive, many due to carelessness and ignorance and willful violations of known law, and that it is not only our privilege but positive duty to try and lessen the stress by removing the causes through the varied helps afforded us. When we have rightly striven and rightly prayed and there are burdens still to be borne, then and not till then, we may feel assured that God wants us to bear them and bear them bravely. God is on the side of order, of health, of happiness. Eventually no doubt, it is his purpose to root out all abnormality through human instrumentality and by his own personal interference through the many avenues and agencies he has with such careful forethought provided. He, of course, could bring this about at once without our help; he could have prevented it at the first, but in so doing he would have been forced to shut against us forever the very gates

of Paradise. Now and here is laid upon us the double command, work and wait, watch and pray.

Our prayers must thus, not only be reasonable, but they must also be offered in the right spirit. The want must be deeply felt, and there must be a whole-souled earnestness in the plea, accompanied with a willingness to make any exertion, and undergo any sacrifice, for the attainment of the end. Until this be our attitude, we are not yet worthy of the help, are not in the mood to appreciate it, and have not the capacity to appropriate its blessings; neither have we prepared the way for God's interference, as we have not fully exhausted our own resources, and thus disclosed the fact, the amount, and the nature of our need. Our prayers should therefore be premeditated, should embody only what we intently long for, what we are convinced we truly require, what after repeated trial we find otherwise beyond our reach, and what in order to obtain we are willing to sacrifice any lower pleasures that stand in their way.

Having thus, after most careful reflection, determined the nature of our requests, being willing to pay the cost involved in the grant, we should come boldly to our Father, and in full faith plead our cause, and then set about life's duties perfectly confident of a favorable answer.

There must be this childlike faith; for Christ's words of promise were, "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire when ye pray,

believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Christ demanded it of those upon whom he wrought miracles of healing: "Stretch forth thy hand," "Take up thy bed," "Go wash." In the command to make the effort, there was clearly implied the promise to add the strength; but the effort must be made in most trustful confidence before the Divine reënforcement would come. We with good reason rely implicitly upon the trustworthiness of nature's divinely derived physical forces. We are willing to stake, and in fact do stake again and again, our very lives and fortunes on our belief in their promptly answering to our call the very moment certain conditions are fulfilled, and in the surety we feel in their honoring to the letter the terms of their commission. Why not as confidently rely on that more direct Divine force for whose help we pray, for it is in as true a sense conditional, with conditions as exact, and it is as prompt and ready to render service the instant those conditions are complied with? Rest assured not until we throw ourselves as unreservedly on the arm of the Almighty as we do on the operations of these lower delegated forces, and this faith is inwrought into the very texture of our lives, can the blessing come.

To have the right spirit when we pray, we must also have our thoughts purged thoroughly from all forms of selfishness. It would seem that so patent a truth requires not even a statement; but this element presents such protean forms, it is so

subtle, assumes so many disguises, borrowing the very livery of heaven, that even the elect are many times self-deceived.

Every reasonable prayer offered thus in a right spirit is certain of favorable answer. The blessings bestowed will be either specifically or substantially what we ask; specifically when the objects sought prove to be or to embody what they seem. This is not always, and perhaps not often, the case; and because of that, the blessings are substantially rather than specifically granted. To illustrate: I remember some years ago noticing in a show-window what appeared to be a basket of most luscious fruit. The forms and the delicate shadings were remarkable facsimiles of nature's handiwork. The bloom was on the peach and the plum and the purple cluster. On the cheek of the apple glowed those brilliant sunset tints we so admire. The rich, juicy look of the sliced melon was brought out most marvelously. It was a masterpiece of art. I have often thought how differently my little boy, had he been with me, would have looked on this overflowing basket. To him it would have been a complete deception, and he no doubt would have plead with me to make him the happy possessor of it,—not that he might feast his eyes, but his palate. The cool flavors, not the colorings and curves of beauty, would have filled his fancy. A specific answer to his plea would have been a downright disappointment, a disillusion, which he would not at all have

relished, for he would have found it but a cunning device of paint and plaster. To have obtained for him the fruit itself, of which he saw only a skilful imitation, would have been to have answered his prayer substantially and to have satisfied his real longings.

Many point to the case of President Garfield as a notable instance of the failure of the prayer test. Countless petitions went up from loving and anxious hearts for his recovery, and yet he died. Because God did not answer these prayers specifically, it is strenuously contended that he did not answer them at all. But how can we, with our extremely limited knowledge, pronounce intelligently on a matter so complicate, involving so many interests personal, domestic, and national? Is it not possible that God conferred substantially the blessings sought, and that the profits and pleasures which we supposed would flow from Garfield's continuance in the private home circle and in his exalted post of public service were absolutely insignificant compared with what his martyrdom could under Divine guidance be made to yield? God very easily could have thwarted the fell purpose of the assassin, and that vast volume of agonizing prayer would never have ascended to his throne from this stricken people. But do you not remember how that event melted into most loving sympathy the hearts, not only of all sections of this great nation, but of all the civilized countries on the globe? Garfield's suffering and death

gave to this generation, under God's beneficent overruling, a spiritual impetus and exaltation which this eminent statesman, through a life however long and prosperous, might never have secured. That prayerful and nobly sympathetic attitude of all good people unquestionably made it possible, as nothing else could, for God to thus convert this seeming catastrophe into a most blessed benefaction.

Perhaps he saw such combination of qualities in Garfield's character and in the character of his counselors as to him seemed ominous of evil. There is many a danger signal which we do not detect, or even suspect to exist. It may be, too, God thus sought to impress upon us again one of those lessons taught in President Lincoln's sudden death, just as the terrible war-clouds were lifting, that a nation's strength and safety depend not upon any frail human life, but upon the cherishing of right principles and the continuance of the Divine care. For our earthly bereavements and losses we may, if we will, secure priceless compensations, "for our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

What deep peace has come, and will come still as the years go by, to that once weeping home circle, through the ever sacred memories of the dead! What fondly cherished hopes have been awakened of glad reunions in that golden by-and-by!

The results to President Garfield himself of his weeks of suffering, and final exchange of worlds, while right at the very zenith of his power and his popularity, we have very inadequate means of measuring; for directly behind him, as he answered the summons, there fell an impenetrable veil of mystery. Perhaps, when we too have crossed the river, we shall find that those prayers for life were answered by the gift of larger, grander life than he in his loftiest moods had ever dreamed of getting.

It frequently occurs that most earnest prayers are offered to promote what appear to be directly antagonistic interests. This fact came out very prominently during our late Civil War. For each of the fiercely contending armies, victory was passionately plead for by most devout believers. Who would question the sterling integrity or religious fervor of Stonewall Jackson? and, as we well know, he fought as he prayed. He imperiled his life and finally gave it as a noble sacrifice to the Southern cause. Were his prayers unavailing? Did God turn a deaf ear to the pleadings of this earnest, self-sacrificing disciple? Most assuredly not, though specifically his prayer was denied. Those who fought with him side by side, and shared his local loves and aspirations, but who have been spared to see this day and to enjoy the phenomenal prosperity of the New South,—its quickened pulse, the development of its inexhaustible mineral resources, the birth of its gigantic



manufacturing enterprises, its improved agriculture, its rapidly growing cities, its business enlargement everywhere, and, more than all, its intellectual and moral renaissance, and the ushering in of a new era of permanent peace, of genuine fraternal feeling, binding it in indissoluble union with those whom it once faced as foes on stricken fields,—those who have thus lived to see this day, with its rich blessings already realized and with its assured prophecies of vastly multiplied prosperities, recognize now that God, while he swept away their cherished institution of slavery and denied them Southern autonomy, suffered their land to be overrun with devastating war, their homes to be left desolate, and their once proud banners to be torn by cannon shot and trailed in the dust, not only granted them the real blessings which they sought, but multiplied them ten thousandfold. They lamentably erred, as they are now free to confess, as to the channels through which those blessings could come, and they have lived to thank God that he, in his deeper wisdom and in his larger love, himself chose the means through which he should bestow his gifts.

We have discovered in the physical universe multitudes of deadly poisons, hidden under various disguises, bearing remarkably close resemblance to substances that are useful and life-giving. Many of them elude our senses altogether. We fail even with our microscopes and our most careful chemical tests to tear off their masks.

We learn of their presence only by their alarming mischief-making. How many of our serious diseases are traceable to these inimical forces, that lurk in the air and water, in the vegetable and animal foods, which we take into our systems unsuspectingly! We are also exposed to intellectual and moral poisons as subtile, as concealed, as deadly, as these which threaten us in the world of matter. How true it is, we are "but children crying in the night, crying for the light, and with no language but a cry," so little certain knowledge have we of what will do us good! and yet, with what unseemly haste we let go our faith, and think our prayers unheard, so soon as any of these hidden poisons are denied!

I remember reading in my early school days, in one of the text-books, of a nobleman, who, while on his return from a long hunt with his favorite hawk on a hot summer's day, filled his cup from a sparkling rivulet that was leaping down the sides of the mountain. As he was lifting it to his parched lips, his hawk with sudden sweep of wings dashed it from his hand, and then, with a strange, anxious call, flew along the bank of the stream toward its source. The nobleman, no little annoyed, again essayed to drink; but the bird the second time upset the cup, and fluttered and called along up the mountain side the same as before. A third time the cup was lifted, and a third time its coveted contents were spilled. The hunter, tired and thirsty, his patience gone, with

quick resentment struck his bird a fatal blow. Then, as he looked on his favorite, dead at his feet, it occurred to him to follow up the stream, for the strange conduct of the bird and his strange call had at last impressed him. In the spring, at the very fountain head, he found, to his utter horror, the half-decayed carcass of a huge serpent, and it flashed upon him that it was deadly poison he had been lifting to his lips, that the faithful bird had saved his master's life, and that this same master in a fit of blind passion had ruthlessly destroyed his. Full of remorse, he dug a grave, laid the bird tenderly in it, and afterward, to mark the spot and tell of his gratitude and his grief, he raised a marble shaft above this his humble benefactor. Is there not a lesson here for us? When we are baffled and beaten back in some of our cherished purposes, when the cups of sparkling pleasure which we are eagerly raising to our parched lips are dashed from us, let us not in our haste conclude that our prayers are unblessed, that God has either turned away in deaf indifference and left us to our fate, or become our covert foe. The seemingly hostile forces may be the very angels of his kindest providence, commissioned to smite from our lips by the beating of their strong pinions sparkling drafts which have come from poisoned springs.

With these explanations I reaffirm with added emphasis that every reasonable prayer offered in a right spirit is certain of favorable answer. To

this, as we have seen, science can urge no valid objection. It is in consonance with the soundest philosophy; it is in fulfillment of Divine promise, it responds to the deepest intuitions of human hearts.

The first effect of modern scientific inquiry has been to weaken faith, and make God seem simply an impersonal, great First Cause, rather than a present loving Father, and ourselves but processes in a vast evolution, parts in an unchangeable order, wheels and pinions, merely, in a mechanism whose movements reach from motes to sun-clusters. A reaction from this paralyzing scepticism has already set in. A faith fervent as that felt before science had birth, seems destined again to prevail, and to be the outcome of this very spirit of inquiry which for the past few decades has threatened to relegate it forever to the limbo of the world's outgrown and discarded thought. Reappearing this time as the ripe result of the nineteenth century's tireless and fearless research into time's deepest mysteries, I cannot see how ever again it can lose its hold on the hearts of men.



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